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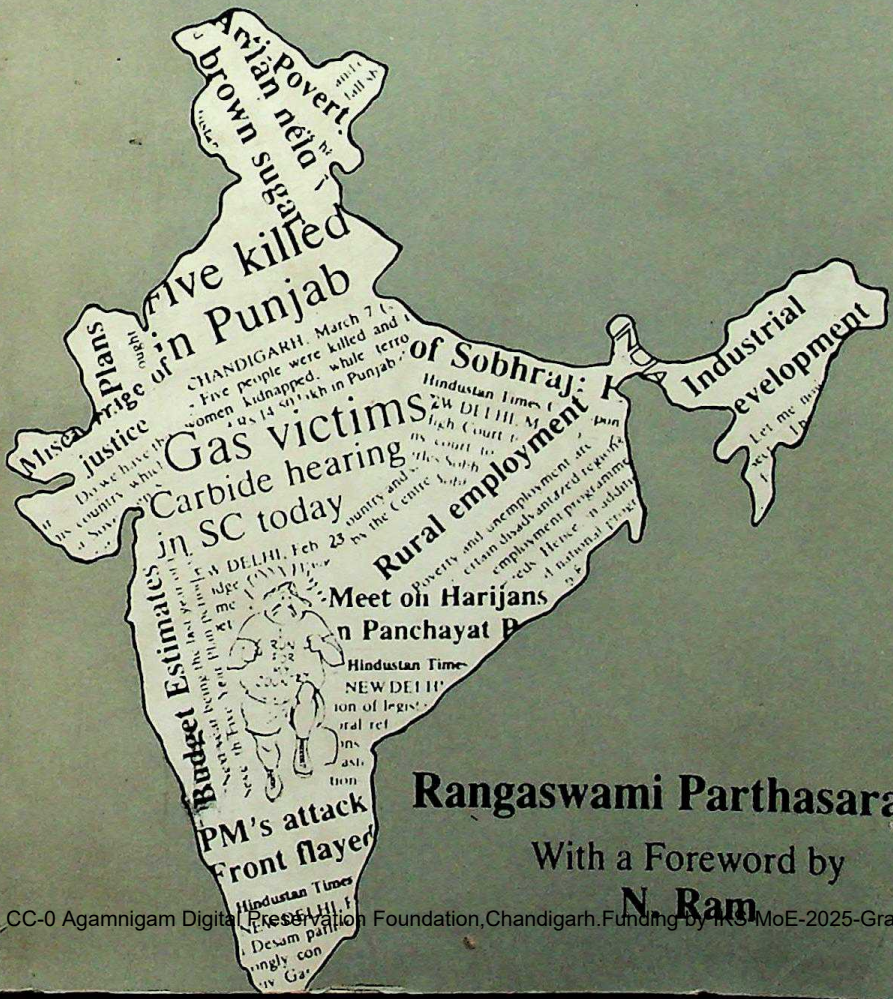
Journalism in India

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY



Rangaswami Parthasarathy

With a Foreword by

N. Ram

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JOURNALISM IN INDIA

From the earliest times to the present day

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From the earliest times to the present day

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FOREWORD

In recent months in India, the press has been very much in the public eye, certainly on the government's mind and, somewhat untypically, a subject of serious political and intellectual debate. It would be no exaggeration to say that, in the late 1980s, the quality of relations between India's unevenly developed, pluralistic and high-aspiring press and its personalised, overcentralised and apparently besieged government is widely perceived as tense, troubled and even truculent. This perception runs in the face of the fact that the press is hardly of one mind and one voice when it deals with the government and society and takes up issues of general relevance. The aggressive pursuit by the press of major defence deal scandals, notably *l'affaire* Bofors, and the episode of the stillborn Defamation Bill, 1988, which provided the public the spectacle of a trial of strength between the government and the press in which the government was obliged to back down and lose face, have strengthened and deepened the perception of adversariality on gut issues.

The apparent surprise in the Indian context is that, institutionally speaking, the press is acting very much like a player in the major league socio-political arena despite the well-known physical limitations, in terms of weight and reach, that apply to it. Ruling politicians have not hesitated to rub in the point, the apparent paradox, at various stages in the career of the press in independent India. The first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was generally regarded as a friend and even a champion of the independent press, did not rate as very "important" the difference the press, with its limited circulation, made to political India habitated by the millions—where he was widely recognised as Prince. The next major Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, for the most part treated the institution and many of the people behind it with unconcealed hostility and contempt—questioning its legitimacy,

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its orientation and its relevance when it was pitted against her government and her ways, and resorting to censorship, manipulation and legal threats to make it fall in line during her Emergency rule of 1975-77. India's sixth Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi—who has had an ambivalent, changeable and, on the whole, troubled relationship with the independent press—has challenged the relevance of the press vis-a-vis the larger relevance of the politics of the *maidan*. These political attitudes ensure that the question, "does the press make a real difference in India ?", cannot be dodged in political and intellectual discourse—even as it must be affirmed that, in sustained qualitative and historical terms, the Indian press enjoys a political, legal and institutional space and a degree of practised independence or freedom that makes its experience very nearly unique in the developing world.

The question of coverage and reach in a country of gigantic proportions, including the second largest population in the world, is a troubling one. Yet, considering the scale of illiteracy and the denial of basic education that exist in India, the reach of the press, its actual coverage and influence, is not at all inconsiderable. According to data available with the Registrar of Newspapers for India, the circulation of all newspapers in 1986 was in the region of 68 million and the circulation of daily newspapers was over 21.5 million. And the growth rates for the five year period, 1981-86, for different sections of the press were quite encouraging. A feature of this progress was the quite buoyant performance of newspapers published in Indian languages, in particular Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil and Kannada.

The issues that the Indian press has taken up and helped shape, through its actively pluralistic coverage, over the long term do add up to some kind of *agenda setting* at the national level. The issues have ranged from India's independence from the fetters of colonial rule to social reform, national security, relations with neighbours and corruption to the basic interests of the people vis-a-vis problems such as hunger, landlessness and exploitation. Naturally, the Indian press, track record on such issues has been variable, but on the whole it is a serious

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and creditable track record that can hold its own against any other major independent press tradition.

In a study done for the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) recently, I had the opportunity to look at the role a relatively independent press can play in anti-hunger strategies in a developing country context and to describe and analyse, to an extent, the Indian experience in some kind of historical perspective. This was in the nature of a follow-up of some interesting theoretical propositions on the role of an independent press put forward by the distinguished economists Amartya Sen in his discussion of famine, poverty, knowledge and related issues. My study related essentially to the kind of difference an independent and pluralistic press with a strong historical tradition makes to public attitudes on two different types of hunger—hunger as crisis, as in a famine, drought or food riot, and 'regular', endemic hunger that generally goes under-reported. The conclusions were encouraging from the standpoint of a theory of the relatively free and pluralistic press as it relates to mass entitlement and popular-democratic issues.

At a time when other societies in the South Asian region and also elsewhere in the developing world are in a process of rethinking and reshaping the question of a pluralistic and independent press which they have lacked, it might not be inappropriate to suggest that the Indian experience commands a wider relevance and some kind of democratic appeal, whatever be its frailties and gaps. Thanks in part to the considerable history (which has been researched to an extent) and thanks also to the professional and political debate that has taken place in the recent period on the role and future of the press as an institution, the experience has become quite accessible.

It is well known that journalism in the third world forms very much of a mixed bag. But cutting through the unevenness and differences, there is the typical stunted and brutalised state of freedom of expression (as part of a wider political framework) in the developing world. This provides a depressingly sticky element of uniformity, perhaps even an organising principle for regimes and systems that would, presumably

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feel insecure otherwise. The *freedom of expression* factor can be singled out as making a great deal of difference to the quality of the society and its developmental and moral experience. The extent to which regimes would go to deny freedom of expression to their people is a kind of perverse tribute to the weight and centrality of the factor. There is an important point of departure in the wider context when a break in the typical developing country experience occurs—either in the longer historical experience, in the sense of a consolidation and a stabilisation of favourable rules of the game, or in very recent times as a result of major political change.

The overall Indian press experience is best looked at within this kind of context, because it highlights the strengths and qualitative effects of the *break in the pattern* and also because it shares some of the weaknesses and frailties of the general developing society situation, which must not be underplayed.

In this connection, we would do well to note that it is not particularly enlightening to speak of the situation of the *media* in India (in contrast to the academic and professional practice in the Western World), at least not in the sense of lumping together state-owned and state-manipulated television and radio and the privately owned and pluralistically operated press—as though comparable circumstances and rules of the game operated for them. There is, of course, a significant interaction between the so-called electronic media (itself a misnomer since newspapers have come increasingly to rely on advances in the fast-growing field of electronics, computers, lasers and so forth) and the press and there are areas, such as advertising and sport, in which they compete directly to an extent. But basically, it is a question of apples and oranges.

The news or journalistic content of state-controlled television and radio has, deservedly, a bad reputation in India in common with the situation of a great many other countries. No 'fairness doctrine' or 'equal time' provision has ever entered the portals of broadcasting in this situation, and indeed the history and the institutional and political context would appear to rule out such questions. The suggestion of quasi-autonomy

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for radio and television within the framework of government control did not get very far even during a phase, in the late-Seventies, when post-Emergency popular feeling against the extremism of state manipulation seemed to demand the experiment. The alternative government, the Janata coalition, did not show itself either willing or able to surrender the advantage of controlling the broadcast sector, which is regarded as a major political resource and an entitlement or perquisite of elected office at the Centre. The apparent partisan political advantage of wielding uninhibited control over television and radio—without so much as paying lip service to some kind of fairness doctrine—has been developed with a vengeance in the Eighties, and in particular by the Rajiv Gandhi administration.

Ironically, the state in the recent period has attempted to press the pseudo-serious demand of 'equal time' on the newspapers which, for all the imperfections of their ownership structure and the tendencies of concentration and agglomeration, do not constitute a monopoly of control over information and news. Basically, what is being alleged against the structural base of major newspapers is that 'vested interests' and business links and pressures come into play, influencing and distorting the news business. Thus do the possessors of the non-independent media attempt to take the ideological fight into the camp of the relatively independent and pluralistic media.

As against this, the point is made on behalf of the press, as it is presently constituted. that three of four major structural constraints—above all, affecting access to affordable and good quality newsprint—imposed by the government on newspapers make them vulnerable in an institutional sense and that the practical situation tends to make the smaller newspapers more vulnerable than the bigger ones which are able, to some extent, to resist the official pressure on their relative independence.

The recent attempt to enact the coup of a draconian and outrageously intimidatory criminal defamation law expressed, among other things, the official perception and standpoint

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that the Indian press was moving "off balance" on gut issues, especially corruption. The attempt was dressed up, unconvincingly, as an exercise to strike some kind of balance between freedom of expression and the "rights of the individual." In a sense, the attempt to change the rules of the game in a vital respect was a tribute to the diverse, pluralistic, apparently intractable role the press as an institution was playing vis-a-vis the government on sensitive issues.

As most of the press, the whole range of the political opposition and a wide section of the intellectual community see it, the issue is one of *credibility*—and here, it is widely recognised, the pluralistic press with its limited reach and mixed-up characteristics holds its own and indeed prevails against the state monopoly propaganda activity represented by television and radio. There is no indication that any Prime Minister of India after Nehru has really appreciated this dimension of the Indian democratic experience; the first head of government's sporadic but earnest warnings against the consequence of the misuse of All India Radio have a contemporary relevance.

The press-broadcasting contraposition does suggest that in the Indian context newspapers serve, to an extent, the healthy democratic function that some media critics in the West, notably Ben Bagdikian, have referred to nostalgically—the function of "a mirror of sorts" reflecting realistically (if not truthfully) what is taking place in the polity and society and also perhaps a kind of balance wheel, bringing reason and diversity of opinion to its reporting and commentary." At the very least, in comparison with the performance of state-manipulated television and radio, the balance wheel has not failed in India.

In the long run, the press cannot afford any sense of complacency in the face of the challenge of television. By its type and scale of operations (especially its capability to entertain) and by its rapid growth performance, television tends to put a significant degree of pressure on the flow of advertising revenues to newspapers; in the long run there will also be, in all probability, some kind of impact on circulation. In general,

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to go by the international experience, the terms of newspaper economics will harden in response to the competition. News and presentation values could also be obliged to undergo changes, in various indirect and gradual ways, as a result of changes in attitude, expectation and preference introduced by television among the potential readership or audience.

Nevertheless, for the conceivable future, the way television is likely to be structured in India is widely expected in professional and intellectual circles to safeguard and set off the independent, pluralistic role of the press. The perpetuation of the present manipulative and propaganda character of broadcasting in relation to news, information and relevant issues is a kind of insurance policy for the press—for both its credible-informational and adversarial functions.

All this underscores the need for deepening the understanding of the history of journalism in India. This task needs to be undertaken at a professional, and also at a general intellectual, level as a matter of priority. Knowledge of the richness of the history of journalism in India—first, as an inspiring part of the liberation struggle and then, as an honourable part of the flawed democratic-institutional experience of independent India— is vitally necessary for safeguarding the historical entitlement and estate, as the campaign against the Defamation Bill, 1988 (recalling earlier anti-Sedition Law campaigns) showed.

The relevant time frame for studying the history of journalism in India is 200 years, as this book by Rangaswami Parthasarathy makes clear. James Augustus Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* was founded in 1780, more than a century-and-a-half after the first English newspaper was launched in London. Nevertheless, as This history points out, Hicky—a dubious kind of historical pioneer—cannot really be considered the pioneer of Indian journalism (except, perhaps, in a prehistoric sense). That honour rightly belongs to James Silk Buckingham, an intrepid whig campaigner and a progressive thinker and writer, whose achievement belongs to the early nineteenth century. He was a redoubtable champion of freedom of expression, he was also quick to see the importance of the

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voices of the Indian freedom struggle asserting themselves in the field of journalism and intellectual expression.

The history of journalism in the pre-Independence period in India can perhaps be periodised as follows. The phase, 1780-1818, constitutes some kind of pre-history, a preparatory phase.

Stage I (1818-1868) is inaugurated by Buckingham and includes the inspiring efforts of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the struggle against censorship, harassment, deportation and persecution, the struggle to establish some measure of freedom of expression, the dilemmas of colonial rulers, the interesting responses to the press question by Bentinck and Metcalfe (the 'Liberator'), the establishment of the pro-Raj *Times of India* and the big impact on the political and intellectual mood of the first War of Indian Independence.

Stage II (1868-1919) witnesses the rise of the Indian press as part of the nationalist or anti-imperialist struggle and the manifestation of two lines or two tendencies in the press. One line is support to the colonial Raj and its policies, the other is a line of criticism and opposition that is prepared for by various developments. This stage sees major technological developments, such as the opening of the telegraph line (1851) in Calcutta, the appearance of the railway and the completion of the land telegraph line from England to India. During this stage, the Indian press comes into its own. Some notable events in this respect are the founding of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1868) and *The Hindu* (1878), with the pro-Raj newspaper, *The Statesman*, also appearing in 1875. The founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 reminds us that the history of the patriotic Indian press *pre-dates* the history of Indian party politics. This stage witnesses the 'Sedition' trials of Tilak (1897 and 1908), the return of Gandhi to India (1915) and the struggle against the Rowlatt Acts and against uncivilised colonial repression. Tilak and Gandhi, themselves considerable journalists, wield a major influence on the field. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre closes this stage, with the press divided sharply into that section which condemns the Mutiny

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and outrage, and the opposite camp which defends, or provides apologies for, this brutal response to the intensification of the freedom struggle.

Stage III (1919-1937) sees the differentiation of the Indian press into 'moderate' and 'radical' tendencies in relation to the strategy and tactics of the freedom movement. The struggle between the nationalist and pro-British press continues. The 'Sedition' trial of Gandhi in 1922 witnesses a heroic response. In Britain, the first Labour Government is formed and new attitudes to the India question are shaped and expressed. In India, nationalist newspapers such as *The Hindustan Times* and the *Indian Express* are established while those already established make impressive progress in their reach and influence. The struggle for the freedom of the press, and for wider civil liberties, acquires a full voice.

Stage IV (1937-1947) sees the maturing of assertive tendencies in the press and significant professional developments such as news services, the pooling of arrangements and the expanded coverage of foreign news. Jawaharlal Nehru founds the *National Herald* (1938) and adopts a forward-looking stand on the press question. As the Congress prepares to assume office upon the transfer of power, new tendencies surface in the nationalist press, suggesting a more assertive and confident role. The strengths, conflicts and dilemmas of the press are interestingly expressed during this stage and the Indian press as a whole gropes towards an understanding of a new role in independent India.

Rangaswami Parthasarathy's lively account provides insights into this rich historical experience and indeed takes the story forward, in some detail, into free India—highlighting the continuities as well as discontinuities of the long historical experience. The author clearly has a special affection for independent, tough-minded journalism that refuses to kowtow to authority and takes on acts of arbitrariness, wrongdoing and authoritarianism by the government.

This history makes it clear that as a reality which would be recognised as a non-peripheral part of the political-intellectual map of India, the press question has a history, a

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depth, a continuity, many-sidedness, a mixed-up, pluralistic quality and a current intensity that help explain the strengths and force of the inspiring oppositional movement that sprang to life round the country to defeat the Defamation Bill, 1988 and the ghosts of repressive and authoritarian measures of the past. The ghosts include the barbaric sedition trials of Tilak (1897 and 1908) and Mahatma Gandhi (1922), the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act of 1908, the Indian Press Act of 1910, the Indian Press (Emergency) Powers Act of 1931, the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act of 1951, the Newspaper (Price and page) Act of 1956, and the brutal anti-press measures seen during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Emergency regime of 1975-76 which reintroduced on the political map of India the hated practice of censorship and prior restraint. This list is not exhaustive and does not include minor league assaults such as the legislative attempts directed at the press in Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Orissa in the eighties. And, unfortunately, so far as the press is concerned. the anti-sedition 124-A of the Indian Penal Code and the illiberal provisions of the Official Secrets Act of 1923 have not yet become ghosts, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru notwithstanding.

At this juncture, the relatively independent press in India is entitled to demand a better constitutional safeguard and guarantee, to ask that its historically won estate and entitlement—known, for reasons of popular understanding, as the freedom of the press—be treated by all players in democratic India, now and in the future, as an *inalienable democratic right*. The whole idea of *glasnost* that has sprung to life in the Soviet Union which has a very different system and set of rules of the game provides support for the necessity and justice of this demand at this point. Rangaswami Parthasarathy's insightful history provides a substantiation of, and justification for, this important demand.

Among other things, this history highlights the contribution made by Indian language journalism and its varied components, and the enormous potential that waits to be tapped round the country. The author looks educatively at the

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'Centenarians' and their very different qualities and contributions over the long term. His choice of exemplars or models will also stir interest on the qualitative side of the field, especially among the younger journalists, students and other young people who want to enter the field but lack an adequate sense of its history.

Rangaswami Parthasarathy brings to this work a long and studied professional experience that began with the *Madras Mail* in 1936 and closed with the successful leadership of the news department of *The Hindu* in the mid-Seventies. Surprisingly for a hard-boiled News Editor concerned with deadlines, datelines and pressures, he went into a second career vis-a-vis the press—this related to the academic side of the field. After his long innings as News Editor of *The Hindu* (he was my News Editor when I entered the journalistic arena in the mid-sixties and I learnt much from this popular and outspoken professional), he researched and wrote the detailed history of the newspaper in time for its centenary celebrations (1978). He proceeded to write his lively *Memoirs of a News Editor*. Journalism, where dabbling and dilettantism are very often the rule, has a reputation for superficiality. It is appropriate that a veteran journalist recognises this and goes for a hard-worked second innings to improve the scholarly literature on the field.

Journalism in India—which has major strengths and resources, physical and intellectual, at its command—needs an internal accountability to higher intellectual and ethical standards, a more precise and less breathless style of work, and public advocacy of its role as a vital part of the striving for a democratic, just society. It is very much in need of a coherent theoretical framework to justify or check out its high ground claims, some kind of critical theory of an independent and pluralistic press in relation to the struggle for a just society. This theory must be capable of doing justice to the rich historical experience and to the developing country context, of shaping internal attitudes on the role and of accounting for the dilemmas and problems that constantly put pressure on the role and the institutional and ethical side of the

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performance. An attempt to relate the history of Indian journalism in a way that relates to current issues and interests and fills a gap in journalism education will be welcomed widely, as a timely contribution.

N. Ram
Associate Editor
The Hindu

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PREFACE

A brief stint as head of an institution where journalism was a course of study revealed to me a vital gap in the knowledge of Indian journalism, its history and growth. There were hardly any books available on the subject and the two books, one by Natarajan and the other by Nadiq Krishnamurthi, considered authoritative, had long been out of print and only stray tattered copies could be found in some libraries. Even they were outdated and did not cover the post-independence period in detail and at length. The desire to fill the vacuum and write a historical and meaningful story of Indian journalism from the days of James Augustus Hicky to modern times led to some voracious reading (the bibliography is witness) and extensive research over a period of two years and what has emerged, I hope, is satisfying and immensely rewarding. In writing this book I have, I believe, gone beyond my predecessors' approach of furnishing bare facts, statistics and names of personalities involved and covered it with flesh and blood making it throb with thrill and excitement. The story of Indian journalism to me is a saga of adventure, patriotism, sacrifice and dedication to a noble profession. It is an exciting tale of the pen fighting along with the sword of ahimsa and non-violence shoulder to shoulder, that I wanted to narrate, of young and old journalists leaving their homes, facing bullets lathi blows and kicks from the minions of an alien regime and being locked up in prison for long years, of editors and proprietors who wrote in letters of blood their undying faith in the cause of freedom and who lost everything, their property, kith and kin and liberty. This was the golden era of Indian journalism and I have attempted, however feeble it may be, to capture the atmosphere and spirit of those glorious days when journalists were poor and hardpressed to make both ends meet but were driven by demoniac energy and inspired by the Mahatma to heroic deeds

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and sacrifices heedless of the pain and suffering they brought about. I have no idea how many of the present generation of journalists are aware of this great chapter in the book of Indian journalism and perhaps this book may give them a glimpse of it. Some of those heroes, the great editors, have found a special place in this book as also the great newspapers which have been in the vanguard of the freedom struggle. The part played by the language press in the freedom struggle as also in the earlier days has been given pride of place in this narrative. I must confess I have not been able to be as exhaustive as I would have liked in writing about language journalism but I hope I have given sufficient indication of their vitality and growth and that the future of Indian journalism rests with them. I have paid special attention to the magazine explosion in the eighties and the spurt which they have given to newspaper reading. But as will be seen in these pages the appearance of news magazines have been a mixed blessing. While they have kindled enormous interest and even excitement among an ever widening readership some of them have been guilty of sensationalism and trivialising news and concentrating on politicians and their foibles to the exclusion of other more important issues which are crying for attention and solution. An element of commercialism has crept in which seems to have infected some daily newspapers also which is apt to warp the mind and distort values. In the words of N. Ram, who has written a very valuable foreword, "Journalism in India—which has major strengths and resources, physical and intellectual, at its command—needs an internal accountability to higher intellectual and ethical standards, a more precise and less breathless style of work, and public advocacy of its role as a vital part of the striving for a democratic, just society."

Since this book was completed many developments affecting the Indian Press have taken place. Some of them I have attempted to notice as a postscript; others must await a future occasion. The language press has continued to grow in all parts of the country and it has not been possible to keep track of all of them. But a landmark was achieved by

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the Malayala Manorama, a leading Malayalam newspaper when it celebrated its centenary in 1987 and President R. Venkataraman inaugurated the celebrations. In Karnataka the Samyukta Karnataka, 56-year-old daily published from Hubli (and now from Bangalore also), which had been, owing to litigation, managed by a Court Receiver for over 25 years, has now been restored to the original trust which had been managing it with a new set of directors. The *Times of India*, reached a century and a half of its existence and celebrated it in great style in 1988. The year also saw the exit of its most famous and able editor, Girilal Jain who had served the paper for a long time loyally and brought fame and name to it. The paper achieved the distinction of being the first Indian newspaper to have an ombudsman and it chose for the post Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagwati, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Another centenarian. *The Hindu*, for all its years, looks younger and younger everyday and overnight has become the most well-known newspaper in the country because of its disclosures on the defence deals of government. Under the *de facto* dynamic editorship of *The Hindu* is charting its way to new areas of glory and achievement, while retaining fiercely its independence of judgement of issues and personalities without being tied up to any party, group or faction. The *Indian Express*, not yet a centenarian, has finally jumped the fence and is now an unsparing and indefatigable adversary of the government and friend, philosopher and guide of the Opposition.

Many friends and colleagues have helped me in writing this book and I thank them. I must specially mention my journalistic guru and mentor, K. Balaraman, and the late N.S. Ramaswami who patiently went through the manuscript and encouraged me. The Editor of Tribune, the Editor of Malayala Manorama and the Public Relations Officer of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* helped me with material relating to their papers and I am grateful to them. I also owe thanks to Jothi Raghavan, Sai Venkatakrishnan, Madhavnarayan, Mrs. Sujatha Krishna Kumar and Mrs. Kama Rammohan who helped me in various ways in getting the manuscript ready. Last but not

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least I owe a deep debt of gratitude to N. Ram for his foreword which is scintillating and thought provoking. That he could spare time for this in the midst of heavy preoccupations is a measure of his love and devotion to the profession of which he is such a shining light.

Madras **Rangaswami Parthasarathy**

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To
The Titans of Yesterday
Who Blazed a Trail of
Glory and Sacrifice

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Journalism is both an art and a profession which records events and opinions and seeks to interpret and mould them for the benefit of educated public.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Journalism is both an art and a profession which records events and opinions and seeks to interpret and mould them for the benefit of the educated public. Its history is the story, in the words of an American writer, "of humanity's long struggle to communicate freely with each other, to dig out and interpret news and to offer intelligent opinion in the market place of ideas. Part of the story has as its theme the continuing efforts by men and women to break down barriers that have been erected to prevent the flow of information and ideas upon which public opinion is so largely dependent."

Is journalism an art or a profession? This has been the subject of a controversy and the last word has not been said on it. C. Rajagopalachari, the last Governor-General of India, believed it was an art. Himself an outstanding journalist in his later years, he told a gathering of journalists: "I want you to look upon journalism as an art and not as an industry. Journalists are like painters and poets rather than factory workers. They are really creating works of art. When you journalists write an article or a leading article or even when you present an item of news, you are creating a work of art." Rajaji said: "Whatever may be your difficulties, whatever your internal pains and travails, you must look upon what you produce as productive, creative art."

It is, however, safe to conclude that journalism is both an art and a profession. The trend in modern journalism, at any rate in India, is to emphasise the professional aspect more than the artistic side.

Man from times immemorial has been curious to know about the what, why and how of events and objects in places far and near. This lack of information and knowledge, because

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of a communication gap, he tried to overcome in various ways and the continuous striving and experimentation over a period of centuries produced the journal (recorder of events and views) and the newspaper.

In the olden days, news travelled by word of mouth. Kings and nobles spread news through messengers and through proclamations which were read out in public places. Hindu mythology records the exploits of a one-man oral newspaper who supplied news to both heaven and earth, to gods, demons and humans alike. He was Narada, a *rishi*, who by modern standards must be considered an ace reporter, who was welcome everywhere, who was a friend of all and enemy of none. He was called a "lover of trouble" (*Kalaha Priya*) and he was the cause of conflict and quarrel in high places which ultimately ended in peace and amity. He was a lover of music and always carried a veena with him. With it he announced his arrival to the victims of his pranks. He had no transport problem. He walked on the clouds and descended from heaven like a glider to the sweet fragrance of his own music. Wherever, he went, the first question asked of him was: "What is the news, Narada?" He was a super-journalist who carried on a one-man crusade against injustice and evil and followed a unique method of provoking conflict so that good might result.

In ancient India, as it is very much in the modern world, what the government (or kings) did, its laws and action against citizens and generally its achievements, formed the staple diet of news. News was given in inscriptions on walls of temples and in copper plates and through victory coins and writings on rocks. There were government officials who by the beat of tom-tom gathered the populace and announced the policies and decisions of the king or government. The King who met his ministers and commander-in-chief daily at a *durbar* gathered news of what was happening in his kingdom and abroad from his counsellors who were expected to be fully informed of events and public opinion. According to tradition, the very first question the king asked of his prime minister at the *durbar* was: "Well, prime minister, what is the news today?"

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In Europe also, news was mainly carried by word of mouth. Kings and noblemen had their own sources of news. Town criers made announcements of local interest. Wandering minstrels, acting as "correspondents" moved from one royal court to another, picking up news of battles won or lost. They gathered useful information for courtiers and merchants and also titbits of gossip which enlivened their stories. They, no doubt, embroidered their news to make a good story as reporters today still sometimes do.

The newspaper as we know it today is of European origin and even there it did not take proper shape until the early part of the 18th century.

Wall posters were the forerunners of the newspaper in Europe and they first appeared in Venice, the Italian city, in 1566. They were called *Notize Scritte* (written notices) and were displayed in public places. A token fee of a small coin called gazetta was levied on those who wanted to read them. This supplied the name of gazettes to the wall newspapers and the word has come down to us even today. They became quite popular and a Venetian magistrate had details of a battle being fought in Dalamatia announced in the wall newspaper. Thirty volumes of these "gazettes" have been preserved in a library in Florence.

Paper, which was first made by the Chinese as early as the second century A.D., did not reach Europe till the 16th century. It is recorded that a member of the Chinese emperor's household used bark from the mulberry tree which he pounded and strained through bamboo screens and pressed into flat sheets and dried. The Chinese discovered the art of printing also. In 868 A.D., Wang Chieh published a book printed from blocks. Copies of it still survive as man's oldest printed book. The first known use of movable types was by another Chinese, Pi Cheng, in 1045 A.D. The oldest evidence of Chinese printing is a Buddhist scripture known as "Diamond Sutra" dated 868 A.D. The printing was done by carving the Chinese characters in relief (and in reverse) on wooden blocks, then spreading the raised surface of the block with ink and

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pressing the paper on it. The ink was made from a mixture of lampblack and resin or gum.

In Europe, a German, Johann Gutenberg, built one of the earliest movable cast metal type printing machines in Mainz in the middle of the 15th century. William Caxton of Kent set up the first printing press in England in 1476, but it was nearly two centuries before the country had a genuine newspaper. Caxton, who was a prosperous merchant, brought printing to England from Bruges in Belgium, 21 years after the first book, a bible, had been printed in Mainz. Caxton set up his printing press in London close to Westminster Abbey and he printed a large variety of books and pamphlets. News, however, continued to circulate by word of mouth or by private or semi-private letters. These newsletters in the 16th century were either those which carried foreign news or those written by "scribes" employed by book-sellers in London to collect items of interest to people who bought them. The foreign newsletters came mainly from Italy which was then a news collection centre. Here news came from all over Europe and was categorised under the names of the towns where it originated. Subscribers to these newsletters, who included statesmen and businessmen from all over the continent, had the newsletters sent to them personally. The newsletters ran into eight pages, whereas the London letters containing local news were four pages long.

During the same period there were published what were called newsbooks which looked exactly like any other book of the time. The earliest of those was published in 1513. They were quite small and contained a description of just one but very important event. The title of a newsbook released in 1557 was: *Valiant Exploits of Sir Francis Drake*. Another gave a detailed account of the battle of Flodden and its curious title was: "Hereafter ensue the true encounter of battle lately done between England and Scotland in which battle the Scottish king was slain." Newsbooks became very popular in the 16th century.

In the summer of 1621, a very rudimentary prototype of the modern newspaper appeared in the streets of London. It

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was a primitive news sheet called coranto. The corantos lacked the regularity that marked a newspaper and they were too specialised in content, but they satisfied a long felt need. It was not until 1624 that the corantos began to be identified by name. One of them was called: "The continuation of our weekly news" and the publisher was mentioned as the office of Bourne and Butter. Initially, the corantos carried only foreign news. The first report of domestic news came with the publication of Parliamentary proceedings by the Westminster clerk in 1628. Out of these accounts developed the "Diurnals" or daily reports of local events. Says a writer: "The Diurnals" flourished during the struggle between King and Parliament when it was safe to comment on local news because neither side was strong enough to take punitive measures and when both factions were seeking public support." The oldest known "Diurnal" was John Thomas "Diurnal occurrences" which first came out on November 29, 1641.

Anthony Smith has mentioned four stages through which publication of news passed in Europe before the regularity and frequency of publication and the diversity of content generally expected of a newspaper was achieved. The first was (as already mentioned) the publication of a single story known in most of the European languages as a "Relation" or "Relacionn", written so long after the occurrence it dealt with that it often sufficed merely to mention the year in which the event took place. The second stage consisted of a series of "Relations" published in the form of a coranto. On May 22, 1622 there appeared a coranto which described itself as "Weekly News from Italy, Germanie, Hungaria, Bohemia, the Palatinate, France and the Low countries." This front page title changed from week to week. Very often one week's issue would begin by describing itself as "Continuation of the previous week's." The coranto, says Anthony Smith, was an invention of primary importance, for it attempted to provide an account of the entire world and to give the reader the feeling of comprehensive periodical knowledge of world affairs. The Dutch printed the greatest number of corantos which they circulated in many countries and in many languages.

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The third stage was the emergence of the 'Diurnal'. The 'Diurnal' gave a weekly account of occurrences of successive days. Robert Coles and Samuel Pecke were the most prominent publishers of the 'Diurnal' in English. They devoted themselves largely to affairs of Parliament. 'Diurnals' came out in profusion in the 1640s as attention shifted from the Thirty Years Wars, which provided the main news for most of the publications in Europe, to the domestic problems in England which were moving to a civil war. Most of them were described as "A perfect Diurnal of the passages in Parliament," followed by the first and last dates when the events described took place.

The fourth and final stage was the Newsbook, also called "Mercury". The "Mercury" was written by a journalist who tried to attract and maintain an audience for the pecuniary advantage it provided or the political returns it commanded. Even so, the underlying concept remained that of a book of news published section by section. The pages were numbered consecutively throughout the series from week to week until the hazards of war or censorship removed the publishers from the scene altogether. Alongside the Newsbook or "Mercury" there developed the "Intelligencer" which had the flavour of being slightly more official than its contemporary. In German it was called the "Intelligenzblatt". With the advent of the "Intelligencer" a wide variety of subjects was covered, indicating an attempt to add new layers of information or entertainment whenever there seemed to be a demand for them and the supply was at hand.

A new era of journalism was ushered in with the publication of the *Oxford Gazette* in 1655, edited by one Muddiman. It was the first periodical to come very close to a true newspaper. It was printed twice a week by Royal authority and after 24 issues it became the *London Gazette*. It continued to be published right up to the 20th century.

The 17th century saw the establishment of the technical and administrative framework for newspapers in Europe, and the 18th century went on to create the newspaper in its

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complete form with daily publication and miscellaneous content. The progress of journalism was speeded up by the development of the party system in government. Parties emerged at the very time when the newspapers came to be a force in the political and social affairs of a people interested more and more in government. A noteworthy fact in the early days of news publication was that it began with a description of events across immense geographical areas and did not confine itself to a small local area. As one writer puts it: "In the societies of Europe, it planted in the mind of the individual literate citizen the picture of a world of public events which he could never see or experience for himself. It placed his own society within the context of the continent and the world."

Once the authorities realised the value of printing and publishing news, they kept a firm grip on the press and nothing could be published without a licence. And that was when the battle started between those who claimed that the public had a right to know and say anything and everything it liked and those who wanted to censor and "use" the press for their own purpose. An English writer described the situation in these words: "The 17th century was a world which presented the writer with two possible dictions: truth and lies. One could not know very easily where truth lay and so authority (whether governmental, traditional or spiritual) had to lead the way. The argument against licensing the press when such was offered, was not an argument against censorship, it was directed solely against a process which prevented truth and lies engaging in open encounter. The classic Miltonic case against licensing in Areopagitica is for freeing the contest so that truth could put untruth into flight."

On March 11, 1702, the first daily newspaper appeared in London and it was called the *Daily Courant*. It was produced and sold by E. Mallet but it lasted only for a few days. However, it was revived by Samuel Buckley who made it into a remarkable newspaper. He insisted on a standard of journalism unheard of at that time. He did not want paper to be a rumour mill and was determined that it should report factual news rather than opinion. He was impartial in the publication of

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news and was careful to indicate the place and date for the news he published. He did this, he said, "so that the public seeing from what country a piece of news comes with the allowance of that Government, may be better able to judge of the credibility and fairness of the relations." Buckley practised what he preached. Himself a Whig he did not slant news in favour of the Whigs although they were engaged in a desperate struggle for power. Printing on a single sheet of paper with the reverse devoted to advertising, he had not much space to experiment in make-up. He used maps and tabulated statistics to explain his reports.

The 18th century saw the emergence in England of great writers and journalists like Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*) and Henry Fielding. Defoe was probably the most important English journalist of that time. He printed and edited the weekly, *Review*. The famous essayists Steele and Addison, started the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. Dr Samuel Johnson was going strong with his journals, *The Rambler* and the *Idler*. Johnson himself was one of the early Parliamentary reporters. According to one writer, "the literacy set of the early 18th century was not the only one to find journalism both interesting and profitable; many other later novelists, essayists even playwrights and poets have been found to write for newspapers and to call themselves journalists and over the years they helped to raise the standard of writing and reporting often to great heights."

These essayists and journalists never became fullfledged members of a profession. Journalism emerged historically with regularity of publication. Only when the postal service, printing capacity and supply of material were all sufficiently and consistently developed to the point at which the appearance of the journal as a weekly, tri-weekly or daily could be assured, could journalism be said to have recognisably come into existence. There were no means of checking statements made by any writer. In the words of a writer: "Journalism does not become professionalised or even occupationalised until it acquires the essential tool of double checking. Until then it remains a mere appendage of printing or in its grander forms, a sub-branch of diplomacy."

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Politics dominated the pages of the London newspapers in the 18th century and they were involved in the intrigues, corruption and factions of the political system. The pre-occupation of the journalist lay quite outside the accurate reporting of facts. As one observer of the scene remarked: "There were no facts more important, nor more urgent than the fate of factions; it was these that provided the revenue, the market and the intellectual compulsion behind the product. The journalist as a so-distant professional processor of information did not yet exist. . . . Money could be made by running a weekly journal partly for profit, partly for payment by a group of politicians. Parliament had become a place within which the affairs of the nation were discussed; the power lay outside the chamber as well as in it and Parliamentary discussions required to be spread through the new political world. Ministers might rail against this paper or that and might prosecute for trivial infringements of the complex laws of sedition and libel but political life had come in large part to depend upon its dissemination and extension into the medium of print."

The demarcation of the various functions or jobs inside a journal or newspaper had not yet taken shape. The printer was the chief man although he might not be the sole or even part owner of the enterprise. The editor was no more than a processor of materials. There was as yet no organised or professional group that could provide an accurate and truthful version of events. The technique of reporting fashioned within the newspaper office was still absent. Accounts of events were taken from foreign journals, private newsletters, hospitals, prisons, markets, and courts. Most material which reached the periodical or the newspaper was sent direct by the source. The printer acknowledged the writer's right to express his views by suppressing his identity.

"The press, throughout the 18th century," says a writer, "was at pains to provide a variety of versions of unproven material for the benefit of ideological factions. The very titles of the papers expressed their function as carriers of observations and 'freshest advices' rather than original material. The journalist was not yet a man who went to look, though occasionally he might by chance see."

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By the end of the 18th century, England was flooded with newspaper reading rooms, each subscribing up to four score papers. John Doherty, a radical reformer, ran a 'coffee and Newsroom' in Manchester which opened at six in the morning and remained open till late at night with the "most able and popular publications of the day, whether political, literary or scientific, available in a comfortable and genteel apartment" which was "brilliantly lit with gas" in the evening. The ale houses purchased newspapers to attract customers where earlier an inn would have charged for the right to read them. The number of readers of newspapers far exceeded the number of purchasers. In 1878, the *Anti-Jacobin* had 2,500 subscribers but claimed a readership of between 17,500 and 50,000. The press was a more active instrument of propaganda than the platform. William Coblett was among the earliest to exploit the medium of print to build up a radical mass opinion dedicated to dismantling the oligarchic political machinery surviving from the previous century.

According to one historian, the 18th century newspaper had been synonymous with political bribery and journalistic scurrility. It was normal for editors to charge "insertion and contradiction" fees, "a polite euphemism for a system by which anyone could print attacks on his enemies at the price of an advertisement and his enemy pay the editor for the opportunity to return them in kind. Even John Walter I, founder of the *Daily Universal Register* (later *The Times*) made money by this means."

Despite the unsavoury milieu in which the late 18th century press was conducted, by the beginning of the 19th century, important advances were made in the technique of journalism and the production of newspapers. A notable advance was the systematic reporting of speeches and debates. The advent of shorthand transformed the art of reporting into a science. "Shorthand", as one writer has remarked, "was the first of that long series of journalistic techniques which at first seem to promise the reader the complete recovery of some semblance of reality. A fully competent shorthand reporter seemed to have acquired an almost supernatural power and

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shorthand was invested with the same kind of social optimism as the microphone and televisation camera in later times. The acquisition of various systems of shorthand leading up eventually to the universally applicable system perfected by Pitman gave reporters their true mystery. It separated the correspondent from the reporter. It meant that a man could specialise in observing or hearing and recording with precision. It was the promised ability to recover the dimension of reality in reporting that turned it into an occupation. One of the most important divisions of labour within the business of newspaper making had taken place—important because it appeared to satisfy a reader's demand. It gave the reporter an aura of neutrality as he stood between event and reader, it gave him the chance to feel that he represented the interests of the newspaper's clients; it connected the task of reporting to the perspective of experimental science and it gave the writer a tool which enabled him to rise to the status of an engineer and the philosopher."

The newspapers of the mid to late 19th century consisted in very large measure of shorthand reports of speeches—political, religious, scientific or educational. "The basic image which emerges", as one writer puts it, "from the newspaper of the period is of a man on a platform speaking to rows of listeners and reaching a wider public via the shorthand reporter. The reporter became, as it were, the principal broker for the substantial discourse of society. In the mid century, the reporter and his notebook bore something of the magic of the new television teams of the 1960s, moving from riot to battlefield, demonstration to sit-in, widely accused of causing the scenes which they recorded and reproduced. In the 1840s and 1850s, the new generation of reporters was credited with having helped to cool the tempers of politics and enabled as it were a national village to develop within which social change could proceed through argument and debate."

The reporter serviced a medium; unlike the author or the printer he was not and could not by his nature be his own boss. The boss was the editor who put him on the job, who commissioned him to report this event or that. The evolution

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of the editor is a key development in the shaping of journalism as a tool for gathering and interpreting news. It was not until 1802 that the term editor was used to describe the man in charge of a periodical or newspaper. If the word was occasionally used it was only to indicate a subordinate employee working under the printer. He was supposed to collect paid material from the public and he would often stand in for the printer when facing outraged members of the public.

The man who led the way to modern editorship was James Perry, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. Together with Daniel Stuart and Johan Walter II of the *Times* he professionalised the job of the editor. With him the demarcated role of the editor as the supreme arbiter, short of the owner, was established. The newspaper became an organisation presided over by a man skilled in delegation, arrangement and judgements of various kinds about the world. With the roles of the editor and the reporter becoming distinct entities, the newspaper took on a new shape and form.

The discovery of the telegraph and telegram created further divisions and demarcations in the newspaper. Reporting from more than one place became easier though much more expensive. As one writer remarks: "The telegraph created most certainly a global village but it raised more issues than it resolved when readers troubled to ask themselves whether they were being given complete and balanced account. The telegraph created a pressure world within journalism. It made possible the idea that a daily newspaper should encompass the events of a day. Henceforward, daily journalism operated within a new tense, as it were, of the instantaneous present."

News agencies helped to speed up the process of supply of news from all parts of the world. The first Englishman to run a news agency was Thomas Phelippes in the Elizabethan era. Among the first to work on a large commercial scale was Charles Havas, a rich Portuguese merchant who ran a news bureau in France in the first half of the 19th century. His contemporary, Bernhard Wolff, a German Jewish physician, with a strong interest in the money market, started a news service in Berlin. Another competitor, who beat them all

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to stay in the field was Paul Julius Reuter. Reuter born in Hesse, Germany, set up his news agency in a small room in Paris with only his wife to assist him. The invention of the telegraph provided Reuter with a splendid opportunity and he opened a small telegraph office at Achen in Holland to supply bankers and merchants with financial information. As more and more telegraph lines opened, his business expanded. When there were gaps between telegraph services, he used carrier pigeons to transmit news. Reuter moved to London in 1850, the year of the Great Exhibition. By 1860, he had established himself as one of the chief suppliers of foreign news to almost every newspaper and periodical in Britain and of news from Britain to continental papers. One of his most famous scoops was the news of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln of the United States in 1865. The American mailboat was leaving New York as the news broke out. Reuter's representative in the city rushed to the docks as the mailboat was moving away. He took aim carefully at the transatlantic ship buffeted by the waves and hurled his dispatch packed in a waterproof canister and it landed on the deck safely.

As the news agencies supplied the newspapers all the news they required of a routine character, shorthand became less and less necessary to the London journalist. Lobby correspondents took over in Parliament and talked to members freely in the lobbies and extracted the news behind the news. Their role has been described by a writer in these words: "The idea was born that beneath the straight reliable account of what was happening in the formal affairs of Parliament, there lay a half-secret, half-conscious world consisting of what was really going on behind the scenes. Reporters who once felt that with shorthand you could capture the essence of the real, now slipped slowly downwards through the professional scale of status, their places at the pinnacle being taken by those who extracted truth from a cloud of obfuscations put up by politicians. Thus, it was in other areas of life. The story lay behind the account of an event. It lay somewhere in the minds of men, however. It could be found and recorded in print, given tenacity and space."

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In the newspaper office, the "story" became the basic molecular element of journalistic effort—a structured nugget of information, the basic unit, through which the reader was to be presented with events. As one writer puts it: "The technique of journalism became analogous to that of fiction and lay partly in the ability to discern those elements which could be made into a transmittable artefact. There was the clear underlying recognition of the audience as a market. The specialism of the journalist and especially of the editor lay in knowing what the market required. News was categorised and pages provided under headings as "Home", "Overseas", "City", "Sports", etc. The "New Journalism" of the 1880s building on the experience of the Sunday press of the mid-century was the first step along the road to the Northcliffe revolution. It recognised that journalism took place within an ever-burgeoning market. The interests of the reader were an unplumbed well which could be explored and re-explored for ever. "Journalism became the art of structuring reality rather than recording it" as has been remarked by one writer.

Journalism now provided, it was claimed, "scope for every type of brain; there was writing for the well-read man, sub-editing for the man of detail, and management for the man of business. The age of specialising left its mark firmly upon the world of journalism. The specialist correspondent closed in on his sources and became an expert in his own right within a given field. His colleague, the non-specialist general reporter was free to pounce upon his subject and extract news."

The greatest newspaper of England, *The Times*, was born in 1784. It was then called the *Daily Universal Register* and it was started by John Walter. The name was changed to its present appellation, *Times*, in 1788. It was John Walter II, son of John Walter I who installed the first steam printing press and took the *Times* towards greatness. John Walter I described the function of the newspaper thus: "It would seem that every newspaper published in London is calculated for a particular set of readers only. A newspaper conducted in the true and natural principles of such a publication ought to be

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the register of the times and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence. . . the general object will be to facilitate the commercial intercourse between the parts of the community through the channel of advertisement; to record the principal occurrences of the times and to abridge the account of debates during the sitting of Parliament."

William Hazlitt, who served on the *Times*, wrote: "The *Times* was the greatest engine of temporary opinion in the world. It is the witness of the British metropolis; the mouth-piece, oracle and echo of the stock exchange, the origin of the mercantile interest. . . It takes up no falling causes; fights no uphill battle, advocates no strong principle. . . It is ever strong upon the stronger side." Another writer wrote: "The *Times* took its position just behind the frontline of the middle class and this became the customary seat from which the political engine of the 19th century paper was driven. It tried to marshal its readers, not goad them. The newspaper, during the era of Revolution, had ceased to be the simple handmaiden of Parliamentary faction and taken on the mature role of an independent actor in the political world." The *Times* was the first to have its own foreign correspondent in 1807, in Germany. About this correspondent it has been written: "He composed beautifully written, rather leisurely essays, believing that a foreign correspondent's job was to give 'the tone and spirit of his time and place' rather than to convey hot news . . . When he was sent to cover the battle of Corunna in 1808, he based his dispatches mainly on translations from the local papers, then put them on board whichever ship happened to be leaving harbour before 'amusing himself by associating with the grand ladies and gentlemen of the city.' " However, the *Times* scored with its first and greatest ever special correspondent in 1850, William Howard Russell, who covered many historic events of his day. "His dispatches read like instant history", wrote an admirer, "and there is no doubt that they influenced and even changed events."

The 1880s and 1890s were the golden age of journalism according to writers and owners of newspapers in England, Europe and the U.S.A. Public opinion appeared to have

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become the primary force by which society moved and its miraculous dynamism was the end product of the newspaper. W.T. Stead who as editor of *Pall Mall Gazette* and later of the *Times*, pioneered the "New Journalism" of England in the 1880s and prepared the way for the mass newspaper of the 20th century, wrote that the telegraph and printing press together "had converted Britain into a vast Agora or Assembly of the whole community in which the discussion of the affairs of the state is carried on from day to day in the hearing of the whole people." The combined operations of a broad electorate, a free platform and a cheap newspaper were widely deemed to have created a perfect mechanism for the governance of society. In the words of W.T. Stead again: "The newspaper is the great court in which all grievances are heard and all abuses brought to the light of open criticism."

Another great editor of that period, C.P. Scott who founded the *Manchester Guardian*, proclaimed the credo of the press: "Comment is free but facts are sacred." He said: "Fundamentally, journalism implies honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness and a sense of duty to the reader and the community. The newspaper is of necessity something of a monopoly and its first duty is to shun the temptations of a monopoly. Its primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong."

In 1815 press freedom in Europe was an idea, a dream, an experiment, a fearful dread; by 1881, it had become an enduring institution, its most admired text enshrined in the French Press Law passed in July of that year. In 1881, Britain also abolished the compulsory deposit required to be made by newspaper publishers and a new libel law was passed which freed newspapers from the fear of prosecution for criminal libel. In the course of six decades the basic pattern of the press was established which has survived into the late 20th century. Everywhere in Europe and America, the mechanical and organisational basis was being laid for the popular newspaper of the 20th century. A much greater range and variety

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of newspapers was developing than had been ever known before—Sunday, evening, regional, financial, and women's papers—aided by a proliferation of experiments with new techniques and new methods of organising the flow of material through the telegraph, news agencies, syndication and serialisation of fiction.

Across the Atlantic in the United States in the early 18th century, the American colonies presented all the preconditions for the rapid growth of a newspaper industry. They consisted of communities of craftsmen and tradesmen serving rapidly rising populations settling in new areas connected by roads and postal services. Postmasters played a key role in the early development of the American newspaper. They collected news and published them in newssheets. They occupied a strategic position since they had access to most of the news of interest to the community. They broke the seals of official pouches and were able to publish important official information. They heard much of the local gossip, were in the know of much that happened in the community and were in an advantageous position to make use of their knowledge.

The first American newspaper was printed in Boston on April 24, 1704, and the editor and publisher was Postmaster John Campbell. It was called the *Boston Newsletter*. It was followed in 1721 by the Franklin Brothers' *New England Courant* and Andrew Bradford's *American Weekly Mercury*. The *Boston Newsletter* was printed on both sides of a sheet and consisted of items taken from incoming London newspapers, already weeks old. Since Editor-Publisher Campbell did not have space for all the news from Europe, he put aside left over items for use in a future issue. This meant that some of the news which the reader read was more than a month old. However, Campbell was able to publish local news more promptly. He cleared all his items with the state governor or his secretary before publication and that made his paper libel-proof, censor-proof and well-nigh reader-proof. Although it was the only newspaper in the colonies for many years, Campbell did not have enough subscribers to make the paper

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profitable. His circulation seldom exceeded 300. But he had a strong sense of responsibility to the readers and he continued to bring out his newspaper in spite of public apathy and financial strain. In one issue he apologised for misplacing a comma in a previous issue although this was only a drop in the sea of errors.

The first daily newspaper was started by Benjamin Towne in Philadelphia, in 1783. Called the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* it had a brief existence of 17 months. By 1800, most big ports and commercial centres in America had daily newspapers. In 1820, of the 512 papers that were being brought out, 24 were dailies, 66 were semi-weeklies or tri-weeklies and 422 weeklies. They were patronised by the more prosperous citizens and the price was more than the average citizen could afford.

A new era in American journalism began on September 3, 1833, with the publication of the New York *Sun* by Benjamin H. Day. It was printed on four pages, each about two-thirds of the area of the modern tabloid page. The front page was three columns wide and devoid of any display. The stories featured were local happenings with the emphasis on news of violence. Most of what was published was trivial, flippant but it was highly readable and it was priced just a cent (penny). Within six months, the *Sun* had a circulation of 8,000, nearly twice that of its nearest rival. Human interest stories were a speciality of the *Sun*. It became the newspaper of the common man, especially the labour class which was coming into its own during this period. While the penny newspapers reached out to the common people as no other medium could, they were not of a high standard. In the words of an observer: "The student of journalism will look in vain for any profound expression of political philosophy in the early editions of the penny press but after the first wave of sensationalism, these publications began to offer information of a more significant type and readers began to show a little more interest in the Government they had the power to control."

It was during this period that the world's greatest newspaper, the *New York Times* was born. Its first issue which

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came out in New York on September 18, 1851, was called the *New York Daily Times*. Its publishers were Henry J. Raymond and George Jones. Its price was a cent (penny) and it was a paper of the masses from the beginning, but it eschewed the sensationalism of the *Sun* and other contemporaries. Its editor wrote: "We do not mean to write as if we were in a pension unless that shall really be the case and we shall make it a point to get into a pension as rarely as possible." The *Times* specialised in foreign news and Raymond, its editor, gained a reputation as a reasonable and objective editor. He developed what was called "reasonable decency" in public reporting. The *Times* was invariably fair in its writing and it avoided personal invective. It gained the confidence of its readers by its technique of careful reporting and it was wedded to accuracy. It soon came under financial strain and the man who rescued it from the verge of bankruptcy in 1896 was Adolph S. Ochs who bought it and guided its destinies until his death in 1935. Under his stewardship the *Times* became a great newspaper with an international reputation.

Ochs, who started life as a worker in a press in Tennessee, came up the hard way. In a declaration of his principles, he said: "It will be my earnest aim that the *New York Times* gives the news, all the news, in concise and attractive form, in language that is Parliamentary in good society and give it as early, if not earlier, than it can be learned through any other reliable medium, to give the news impartially, without fear or favour, regardless of any party, sect or interest involved; to make the columns of the *New York Times* a forum for the consideration of all questions of public importance and to that end to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of opinion." On the death of Ochs in 1935, his son-in-law, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, took over. The *Times* ranked first in public opinion polls on newspapers and has continued to hold its place in the forefront of American journalism by maintaining its tradition of giving the news with completeness and integrity.

Another great newspaper publisher of this period was Joseph Pulitzer, who has been called the leading American editor of modern times. He published the *Post Dispatch* of

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St. Louis in 1878 and in a statement of policy, said: "The *Post Dispatch* will serve no party but the people, be no organ of Republicanism but the organ of truth; will follow no causes but its conclusions; will not support the administration but criticise it; will oppose all frauds and shams wherever and whatever they are; will advocate principles and ideals rather than prejudices and partisanship." When he was nearing retirement in 1907, he wrote in his paper: "I know that my retirement will make no difference in its cardinal principles, that it will always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demogogues of all parties, never belong to any party, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing news, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong, whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty."

Pulitzer's immense energy and his highly developed journalistic sense enabled him to adopt and to develop in his own way the publishing concepts and techniques of his time and to satisfy his passionate desire to win unquestioned recognition as the builder of the brilliant staff and the complex mechanism of a great modern newspaper. His true greatness lay in his highminded conception of a newspaper's role, particularly in exercising editorial leadership and in the way in which he made that conception live in the newspaper. Not content with reporting the surface news, Pulitzer told his staff: "Never drop a thing until you have gone to the bottom of it." His watchwords were: "Continuity, continuity, continuity until the subject is really finished." This resulted in the paper's determined crusading in the public interest with an intensity heightened by Pulitzer's personal involvement.

Pulitzer considered the day a loss if his paper did not have one distinctive feature—a crusade, public service or big exclusive story. He wrote once in the *New York World* which he bought in 1883 and made into America's largest circulated newspaper: "A newspaper should seek what is original, distinctive, dramatic, romantic, thrilling, unique, curious,

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quaint, humorous, odd, apt to be talked about without shocking good taste or lowering the general good tone and, above all, without impairing the confidence of the people in the truth of the stories or the character of the paper for reliability and scrupulous cleanness."

At the turn of the present century, American newspapers were able to produce well over 100 pages in some of their issues. From 1910, off colour printing became possible and colour was extensively used in display advertising.

Today, in America, the traditional definitions of a newspaper are being modified and expanded to accommodate changes in society, reader demands and new technology. But the traditional roles remain too. In the words of an American writer: "The newspaper is historian, reporter, analyst, communicator, salesman and advocate. Information is the staple of any good newspaper. But most hope to influence their readers as well as inform them. Newspapers influence through their total presentations and their image in the community and not through their advocacies alone."

Modern technology in newspaper printing and publishing has reached stupendous proportions with the advent of the electronic era but in 1820 printing a newspaper was a hazardous job and posed many problems. Before 1860, newspapers were being produced through single stamped sheets and in that year rolls of paper were used successfully to make the printing of newspapers easier. Four thousand copies reeled off the machine without interruption from rolls of paper three and a half miles in length.

The American inventor, Richard Hoe, in 1840 developed the first version of the rotary press which he sold to a Paris newspaper. He found a way to fit the printed type round a cylinder which was then inked by automatic rollers, while four smaller cylinders brought the sheets of paper into contact with it. More cylinders were added later which meant a greater number of copies could roll down the rotary. The lino-type machine which set up type and which revolutionised printing was not in the market until 1892. It was originally made by

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Ottman Mergenthaler, a German emigrant to America. The problem of printing continuously and simultaneously was solved by Hippolyte Marinioni who demonstrated his advanced rotary press in the Paris Exhibition in 1869. This model turned the roll of paper back on its path enabling successive sheets of large or small size to be printed on both sides and then cut and folded into piles of completed newspapers, all at great speed.

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THE PIONEERS

The newspaper came to India as an alien product, as one of the benefits of British rule. In the early years it was confined to, and subserved, the interests of the ruling race and its subject people had very little to do with it, not for a very long time. The East India Company which was ruling the country was not favourably disposed to the press and its officials were from the beginning suspicious of journalists and newspapers, and intolerant of criticism. But the press at home (England) was gaining in power and influence with a strong public opinion behind it and it could not very well be stopped from functioning in India which was a dependency. The press in India controlled by Englishmen drew its strength from the power of the press in England.

James Augustus Hicky has the distinction of launching the first newspaper in India. His *Bengal Gazette* alias *Calcutta General Advertiser* came out on January 29, 1780, in Calcutta as a two-sheet weekly. It declared itself as a "weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none." It printed items taken from English newspapers at home, letters from local and *mofussil* readers and items of gossip and scandal of interest to the European community.

Hicky had a column to himself which he used to talk to his readers directly and there was a poet's corner too. It was described as a "witty and scurrilous" paper and very soon earned the enmity of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General and Chief Justice Elijah Impey and, generally, the administration. Hicky lampooned Hastings and called him "Sir F. Wronghead, the Great Moghul" and quite simply, the "Dictator". He made him sing a song the title of which was "Know then, war is my pleasure." Reporting an imaginary

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concert programme, he linked the name of Sir Elijah Impey with a contract for a bridge that had gone to his cousin and billed him for the song: "Gold from law can take the sting."

All the notables of Calcutta appeared in his column with nicknames and one lady who frequently found herself mentioned under various nicknames was Miss Eruma Wrangham, who in the words of a writer, "kept the gossips busy for 10 years at least and enjoyed their malice as much as everything else." Of her, the well-known chronicler and Hicky's namesake and contemporary, Willian Hicky, had written: "A fine dashing girl not by any means a regular beauty but an uncommonly elegant figure and person; remarkably clever and highly intelligent. Her natural flow of spirits frequently led her into extravagancies and follies . . . ; instead of seating herself like other women on horseback, she rode like a man astride and would leap over any hedge or ditch that even the most zealous sportsmen were dubious of attempting. She rode in matches and succeeded against the best of and the most experienced jockeys. She was likewise an excellent shot, rarely missing her bird; understood the present fashionable science of pugilism and would without hesitation knock a man down if he presumed to offer her the slightest insult; in short, she stopped at nothing that met her fancy, executing whatever she attempted with a naivete and ease and elegance that was irresistible."

Francis, member of Warren Hastings' Council and his bitter foe, referring to her in a letter to a friend wrote: "If you have literally married Wrangham or if Mackenzie should have married her or Collings or Archdekin . . . ." and her name was coupled with several more in the *Bengal Gazette* to whom "Wrangham was a godsend." In its columns she appeared as the "Chinsura belle" or "Turban Conquest", or "Hookah Turban" (she must have smoked a hookah for a bet). She is mentioned with great regularity in such items as "Public Notice": Lost on the course last Monday evening, Buxey Clumsy's heart, whilst he stood simpering at the footsteps of Hookah Turban's carriage . . . . " Several of her beaux are identifiable under various offensive aliases.

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Hicky's fortunes began to decline when a rival appeared in *Indian Gazette* in the same year as he began his venture. It was a much better newspaper with four pages, each 16 inches long with three columns and well printed. When Hicky found his customers were deserting him, he attacked first the Swedish missionary, John Zachariah Kiernander, whom he suspected of supplying types to his rival and then the proprietors, Peter Read, a salt agent, and B. Messinck, a theatrical producer. What aggravated his feelings was the grant of postal facilities to the *India Gazette* and their denial to him. He bitterly complained to his readers that undue pressure had been brought to bear on Hastings through his wife to withhold postal facilities to him. It was suggested that he should seek Mrs. Hastings' intervention in the matter but he rejected it, saying, "there is something so sneaking and treacherous in going clandestinely to fawn and take advantage of a good-natured woman to draw her into a promise to getting that done which I knew would be highly improper to ask her husband, though his unbounded love for his wife would induce him to comply with."

There was no love lost between Hicky and Warren Hastings. Nor was he popular with officials and many merchants and businessmen. The publicity which he gave to the social life of the European community in Calcutta was not untouched by malice and ridicule. While announcing marriages and engagements, he also published news of engagements anticipated and he utilised this to hit people he disliked. Hastings finally took action against him for defamation on two counts in June, 1781. Hicky was convicted and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2000. The chief justice awarded damages to Hastings of Rs. 500 but the governor-general waived it. Although Hicky spent time in prison, the *Bengal Gazette* continued to appear regularly and mysteriously his column too, which continued to be defiant in tone. The paper had greater public support. Hastings launched another action against Hicky in March, 1782. As a result, the types for printing the paper were seized and that was the end of Hicky's *Gazette*. It had barely lived two years.

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The Bengal *Gazette* was the forerunner of many more journals and newspapers which appeared in Calcutta, which is the birthplace of journalism in India. Within six years of Hicky's venture, there were four weeklies and a monthly in the city.

In the other two Presidency cities, Madras and Bombay, there were not many newspapers. In Madras, the *Madras Courier*, which was officially recognised and owned by the government printer, came out as a weekly in 1785 followed in 1793 by the *Hurkaru* edited by one Boyd. The *Hurkaru* ceased publication after a year. The *Indian Herald*, an "unauthorised newspaper", which had a brief existence, was notable for its editor, Humphreys, being punished for printing without permission and for "gross libels" against the government and the princes.

There was no newspaper in Bombay until 1789 when the *Bombay Herald* was started. It merged into the *Bombay Gazette* in 1791 and became an official publication. The *Courier* was another paper to make its appearance in 1790 and it had the distinction of carrying advertisements in Gujarat to serve an Indian readership.

The government exercised strict control over the press. Parliament proceedings in England could not be published in the press in India as they were considered "seditious literature". A man, William Bolts, was prosecuted for supplying from Parliamentary proceedings to Siraj-ud-Doula, the Nawab of Bengal. Newspapers in Bengal were ordered in 1785 not to publish orders and resolutions of the governor-general's council. In Madras, they were asked to submit copies of Government orders to be published to the military secretary to the governor before publication. There was general precensorship on news carried in the papers. While the press was submissive in Madras and Bombay, in Calcutta there was at least one case in which an editor, William Duane, of the *Bengal Journal*, refused to publish an apology in 1791. He was accused of publishing a false report of the death of Lord Cornwallis in the Maratha war. He said the source of his news was a prominent Frenchman. Duane was ordered to be deported

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but was saved by the intervention of the French Agent. He, however, lost his editorship and started another paper, the *Indian World*, which ran successfully for three years. Duane was, however, a marked man and the government succeeded in having him deported in 1794. Another journalist to be deported was Dr. Maclean of the *Bengal Harkarer* in 1798, and the charge against him was that he had come to India without permission. It seemed that deportation for "indiscretions" in the press had the sanction of the Board of Directors and the seal of the Supreme Court.

The government's attitude was one of contempt for newspapers and their editors. The newspapers, in fact, were organs of local British opinion and reflected the views of those outside the privileged official circle of the administration. Though the merchant, the lawyer and the doctor were not taken seriously, there were occasions when their views did carry some weight. But the Government was convinced of the need to keep the press under tight control. The press was intended for British readers and it tended to share the virtues and vices of contemporary journalism in Britain. Many of the newspapers were digests and reprints of British newspapers. They also resembled their contemporaries in Britain by being highly critical of the Government.

In the early years of the 19th century, Calcutta saw the emergence of the first real journalist, an outstanding one and, by all accounts, the tallest in his profession at that time, James Silk Buckingham. Jawaharlal Nehru has described him as among the earliest champions of the freedom of the press in India and as one "who is still remembered" in this country. He came to India in 1818 as the editor of the *Calcutta Chronicle*, which was started by some Calcutta merchants to propagate their views and protect their interests. The first issue which appeared on the streets of Calcutta on October 2, 1818, indicated that it would be a chronicle of political, commercial and literary news and views. And it bore the impress of a versatile editor. He brought a breath of fresh air to an atmosphere polluted by the intrigue, scandal-mongering, flippancy and easy going life of the European community. He

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had travelled widely in the Arab countries and was reputed to have advised the Egyptian statesman, Mehmet Ali, on bringing the benefits of Western culture and civilisation to his countrymen. Buckingham was a scholar whose studies included anthropology and literature and he was interested in steam navigation, horseless carriages and air-filled balloons for quick transport. He was a keen observer of the customs and habits of the people among whom he lived. He introduced to his readers Byron and Walter Scott and Washington Irving. He published drawings and charts to drive home his point on any subject and he compared the facial features of monkeys, Negroes, Romans, Greeks and Americans. He balanced these features with local reports and letters from correspondents ventilating their grievances. The letters to the editor were a notable feature of the *Calcutta Chronicle* and they were in strange contrast to what used to appear in the earlier newspapers, especially in Hicky's *Gazette*.

Buckingham laid emphasis on news of local conditions rather than fashions, the life of the people rather than the social round, and criticism rather than invective. Before he came to Calcutta he was a Whig at home and the extracts from the home newspapers he carried in his paper reflected Whig views. His editorials concentrated on the omissions and commissions of the government's policy in regard to postal service, military establishment and the Government's indifference to gain monopoly. He was also fearless in condemning certain Indian customs like *sati* and the government's failure to put an end to them. He gave prominence to news and views in Bengali and Persian journals and published a summary in his paper. He was a friend of the native (Indian) press and defended its right to exist and voice the opinion of the Indian people. He wrote: "The pleasure with which we regard the criticisms of the native press does not arise from the intrinsic value of these productions or its infancy but as an earnest of what it may produce when it has attained maturity. We, therefore, regard with pity those attempts that have been made to treat it with contempt by supercilious remarks on the ideas of one, the puerile criticisms of the style of another. The

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Buckingham was the father of Indian journalism —

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languages of the East are surely fit for nobler purposes than being conned over in schools and colleges and stored up in lexicons; and those who think they show their superiority by flippant criticisms on the first efforts of the press among Eastern nations should have liberality enough to recollect that the lispings of infancy are as sweet to the ear of the philanthropist as the eloquence of manhood."

It will not be an exaggeration to claim that Buckingham was the inspiration behind the growth of Indian journalism. He was truly the father of Indian journalism just as Allen Octavian Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, was the father of Indian nationalism. It was with the advent of Buckingham that the press really began to discuss public questions and for the short period he was active in Indian journalism he concentrated on the public conduct of bureaucrats and state functionaries and educated public opinion. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who came to Calcutta two years before Buckingham, was greatly impressed by his gifts as an editor and Buckingham himself saw in Ram Mohun Roy a kindred spirit.

Buckingham considered a well conducted press essential to promote knowledge and dispel ignorance. He wrote: "If knowledge is a blessing and ignorance a curse, a well conducted press that dispels the latter and promotes the former must be as deserving of our support as the schools and other public institutions established for the same purpose since they are only different branches of the same tree; and as the influence of the press may be made to extend much wider than that of seminaries, if each be well regulated and directed to equally worthy ends, the former will be the more effectual engine of the two. The union of both is perhaps the greatest advantage that any nation can possess . . . to excite a taste for reading and a spirit of enquiry among the community generally and to gratify that taste . . . must, therefore, be a task of merit."

He was a stout champion of the freedom of the press and he held views which could be called revolutionary in the background of the prevailing notions about the press. He wrote: "Of all remedies proposed for checking evils inseparable

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from authority exercising almost absolute power, there is none that can be compared with a free press . . . . When men know the eyes of the world to be upon them and that their conduct will be scrutinised by their enemies as well as friends, they are more careful to act justly than when they know that their deeds will neither be seen nor questioned. But because it is more agreeable to all men to act without control than to submit to the censure of others, whoever has the power to render himself irresponsible to his fellow-men will be sure to do so. It is the province of law to set limits to the exercise of this power. And, therefore, all men in authority especially those who are despotically inclined and who are conscious that their conduct will not stand the test of free discussion, hate this part of the operation of the law and hate also its upright administrators. Even British judges—the most upright of all public functionaries— betray a leaning towards the side of power. But if this tendency to strengthen the hands of authority be manifest to those who sit upon the bench in England, what may be expected to be the state of feeling and conduct among judges in distant dependencies? Then, in the narrow circle in which they move, the constant personal intercourse with governors and their favourites, the absence of a free press or a scrutinising public, the power of governors to make their lives uncomfortable by a thousand nameless means, the love of ease in enervating climates and the desire so to please the persons in immediate authority as not to endanger their present gains and to establish a strong claim to future consideration; there where all these powerful agents are in continual operation to tempt the judges from their duty and turn into instruments of those who hold the reins of Government, what may be expected of their conduct? Why, precisely what it generally is; namely, a just administration of the law in all cases that occur between individual and individual, where there is no reason to believe that the decision will excite the disapprobation of the ruling power; but a complete subserviency to this power in all cases that occur between it and those subject to its sway? This is the general rule.

"Whenever the reverse happens, it is a fortunate as well

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an honourable exception; and whenever that exception occurs, it is the duty of those who honour virtue and integrity to proclaim it aloud; for the sake of imprinting by every possible means this precept on the minds of men—that whenever an individual with a superior head and heart is found, with an understanding large enough to know and a courage undaunted enough to perform his duty to his fellow creatures; it behoves every man who honours virtue to rally round him, to shield him wherever possible from his enemies and to cheer him with admiration, sympathy and regard."

The *Calcutta Chronicle*, which appeared twice a week and was an eight-page paper, had eight other rivals and these led by Bryce, editor of the *Asiatic Mirror*, attacked Buckingham and raked up his past. (We do not know anything about his past unless by this is meant his Whig political sympathies.) Buckingham had antagonised the members of the governor-general's council and other officials by his criticism of their policies. They, the advocate-general and a section of the Supreme Court wanted to have him deported. The Lord Bishop of Calcutta and the Anglican clergy smarted under his criticism of their neglect of duty.

Although Buckingham had the support of the Hindu intellectuals like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, this was all ability rather than a strength to him. He was assaulted and injured by an opponent, Darwell, in 1819. He appeared in court as a defendant in a libel suit brought against him by some top officials of the Government. The advocate-general also proceeded against him for criminal libel. The case fell through but the costs to be borne by Buckingham were heavy. His opponents finally succeeded in having him deported in 1823.

Buckingham had appointed an Anglo-Indian as his successor who could not be deported. Justice Macnaghton held that since the successor claimed that he could not be controlled by the Supreme Court, "It is necessary that things should be brought to their proper level." A similar view was expressed by the Privy Council to which Buckingham had appealed. It said that the necessity for licensing the press in India arose because native opinion was likely to be disturbed by writings

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in Persian, Bengali and other Indian languages and that deportation had ceased to be effective once newspapers began to be ostensibly conducted by those other than British subjects of the crown.

Buckingham's crime was that he came too close to topics that touched the very roots of the administration. His repeated disclosures of official malpractices and his success in securing redressal of grievances proved a danger to the East India Company and its reputation. The immediate provocation for action against him was his exposure of the unusual appointment of the head of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Dr. Bryce, to a clerkship in an office for supplying to the government pens, ink, pencils and other articles, which was contrary to law. The governor-general issued the deportation order against him under the new press regulations. The government also passed an order prohibiting the publication or selling of any newspaper or journal of which the governor might disapprove. Another attempt to suppress the *Calcutta Chronicle* was made after Lord Amherst took over as governor-general. But since the editor was an Anglo-Indian half caste, he could not be deported without trial. Arnot, a sub-editor, was arrested and put in prison. Although he was released on appeal to the king's court, he was again seized by a government's order and transported by ship to England. Though he was kept as a prisoner, he was asked to pay for the expenses of the long voyage. The *Calcutta Chronicle* was then suppressed until a son-in-law of Buckingham came over to accept the editorship. Buckingham appealed to the Board of Directors and Parliament against the injustice meted out to him and his paper. It was a long time before he obtained as compensation an annual pension of £ 200.

An Indian historian has described the significant contribution to Indian journalism by Buckingham in these words: "He made the newspaper the mirror of the people. He manifested at its keenest and most persistent, the spirit of enquiry and criticism. And he imparted to the press the quality of leadership. The bureaucracy wanted, by deporting him, to make him a warning to others but it could not put down

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Buckingham was a journalist who was born and not made

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the spark he had kindled. Buckingham was one of those journalists who are born rather than made."

The restrictions on the press and the deportation of unwanted journalists did not go without protest from some conscientious Englishmen some of whom were officials of the East India Company. Among them was Sir Charles Forbes who had served in Bombay and was reputed to have borrowed money from Indians to finance Sir Arthur Wellesley's Maratha wars. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1825, he said the conduct of the government in India "loudly called" for the intervention of Parliament. He said that things could not be allowed to remain as they were and added that natives were "continually imprisoned without trial and without hope of trial." He said he knew of a native ruler who had been confined for 15 years "whose only offence was that he was beloved of his subjects". He called the restrictions on the press as "absurd and useless".

Supporting him was another official, Joseph Hume, who had been an army surgeon, paymaster and postmaster. He held that nothing tended more to the promotion of good government, to the progress of knowledge and morality than the legitimate liberty of the press, "but now no one can speak his sentiments in India without running a risk of being deported." He said that the system of intimidation had been "carried to a monstrous excess" and that "prescription had followed prescription and that the deportation exercised by the Indian Government was unexampled in Indian history". Col. Robinson of the 24th Infantry Regiment who wrote to a Calcutta journal in 1822 protesting against the curbs on the press was cashiered. He wrote that the press had done more to check abuses of power, foul play, illegal trading and cheating than all the regulations of the Bengal Code.

In Bombay in 1823, there was the peculiar situation of a member of the governor's council, Francis Warden, owning two newspapers, the *Bombay Gazette* and the *Bombay Courier* and when one of his papers criticised the judiciary, a controversy was provoked. Sir Edward West, Supreme Court judge,

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drew the attention of the Governor, Sir Mount Stuart Elphinstone, to a report in the *Bombay Gazette* about a contempt of court proceedings in his court. The report, he said, had made comments on the proceedings which were not correct. The governor undertook to reprimand the editor. The latter part of the same proceedings were presided over by Sir Charles Chambers who wrote to Elphinstone that he had been misquoted and misrepresented in the *Gazette*. The governor demanded from the editor, C.J. Fair, an immediate and public acknowledgement of the misstatements and an apology to Chambers. The editor offered to insert an apology in the paper together with a report of that part of the trial which had been earlier omitted. The governor, however, was not satisfied with the apology that was published and withdrew Fair's residential permit and ordered him to leave the country or deposit Rs. 30,000 as security. Since he was unable to furnish the security, he was deported in July, 1824.

A fall-out of this incident was an order in 1825 by the Board of Directors that Company servants should have no connection either as proprietor or editor with any journal which was not devoted to literary or scientific topics. Silk Buckingham, commenting on this, wrote in a London newspaper: "The Bombay Government waited for six months before they carried out this moderate suggestion of the Court of Directors into effect, in order to give time to Mr. Warden to dispose (at least nominally) of his property in that very newspaper whose misrepresentations of the court's proceedings had occasioned such a measure. The government adopted it reluctantly, because when carried into effect, the registry of the real names of the newspaper proprietors at Bombay would necessarily expose the system of duplicity which they had carried on so long. It must expose the hollowness of Elphinstone's enfranchisement of the press, the newspapers of his Presidency being the property entirely of his personal friends . . . and, therefore, subject to his wishes. Next to this it must expose the facility with which they might have restrained the abuse of the court without banishing Mr. Fair. Thirdly, it would expose all the flattery of Elphinstone and Mr. Warden

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as emanating from their own immediate creatures. On these, as well as on other grounds, anything approaching to the English freedom of the press, the government were most reluctant to consent to."

As a consequence of the Board of Directors' order, the Bombay Government presented to the King's court for its sanction, a proposed law prohibiting the publication of any newspaper except by persons holding a licence revocable at will, from the governor. Sir Edward West, chief justice, held there was nothing in the state of Bombay society to justify such a restriction on the liberty of the subject and gave his opinion against the proposed "regulation". Sir Charles Chambers supporting the chief justice believed that to introduce such a rule at "a time of perfect tranquillity . . . would be imposing new shackles to restrain no evil and by leading to by-paths of favour and influence, to create perhaps a greater evil than it could obviate." The court gave its opinion against the regulation much to the indignation of the government.

Elphinstone's argument in support of restrictions on the press was: "In other countries, the use of the press has gradually extended along with the improvement of the country and the intelligence of the people; but we shall have to contend at once with the more refined theories of Europe and with the prejudices and fanaticism of Asia both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed. Is it possible that a foreign government avowedly maintained by the sword can long keep its ground in such circumstances?"

Another famous official, Sir Thomas Munro, said that a regulated press was essential for the healthy political development of the people of India. "A free press", he said, "and the domination of strangers are things which are quite incompatible and which cannot long exist together . . . . The desire of independence and of governing themselves which in every country follows the progress of knowledge ought to spring up and become general among the people before it reaches the army. If we, for the sole benefit of a few European editors of

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newspapers permit a licentious press to undermine among the natives all respect for the European character and authority, we shall scatter the seeds of discontent among our native troops and never be secure from insurrection."

A grim picture of the condition of India during this period has been painted by an English writer. He says: "The 10 years between the Maratha wars and the arrival of Lord William Bentinck as governor-general in 1828 were dark years for India as they were for England. Maladministration had now reached breaking point. Not only in the newly acquired provinces of western India but all over the Company's territory, an impalpable autocracy, soulless and bodyless was destroying with merciless taxation the very life of the country. Natives were leaving the Company's dominions for the native states or flocking to the Presidency towns to escape the anarchy of the provinces. Commerce had come to bear no relation to commerce rightly understood, for ship after ship was bringing to England the produce of India's taxation without corresponding return. The press which had been subject only to ordinary law under Lord Hastings was now in Calcutta made subservient to the Company by the passing of arbitrary licensing laws."

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3

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833) has been described by Jawaharlal Nehru as a founder of the Indian press. Another writer has said : "He was perhaps the first 'Modern Indian'. The incentive of Roy's example was to produce the greatest awakening of Indian India in the second half of the 19th century." He was the earliest champion of press freedom. He was a fighter for social reform and he wielded his pen in the many journals he sponsored to achieve a social and cultural renaissance in Hindu society. Born in a Brahmin family, he learnt Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and English. He entered the Company's service but later resigned to utilise his time and energy for social reform. He believed that Hindu gods and idol worship were accretions to the true Hindu scriptures.

He founded the *Sambad Kaumudi* (Moon of Intelligence) in 1821 in Calcutta ; due to the success of another rival, *Samachar Chandrika* Roy was forced to close it down in 1822, but it was revived the following year. Roy also started a newspaper in Persian, *Mirut ul Akhbar* (Mirror of News) in 1822 but shut it down in 1823 in protest against the press regulations of 1823. The Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, Butterworth Bayley, made frequent mention of Roy's Persian weekly to justify the restrictions on the press. Roy gave three reasons for closing down his paper. "(1) An Indian had no access to officials as English editors had to secure a licence as required under the new law. (2) To make an affidavit in open court in the presence of respectable magistrates is looked upon as very mean and censurable by those who watch the conduct of their neighbours. (3) After incurring the disrepute of soliciting and suffering the dishonour of making the affidavit, the constant apprehension of the licence being revoked

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by government which would disgrace the person in the eyes of the world, would create such anxiety as entirely to destroy one's peace of mind."

It was under these new press regulations that Silk Buckingham had been deported in 1823. Ram Mohun Roy had presented a petition through his counsel, Fergusson, to the Supreme Court on behalf of the natives of India protesting against the regulations. But Justice Macnaghton ignored the petition, pointing out the anomaly of a free press under a system which was not free. From the very beginning, Roy provoked the opposition of the administration and the European community in general who did not want him to propagate his views on social reform and religion and were dismayed by the tenacity with which he persisted in his campaign as a social reformer. Some of the Company's employees carried on an active tirade against him and persecuted some of the Indian employees for their kinship with him. It was said that the administration as a whole looked upon his activities with considerable misgiving. He was generally considered as "unrepresentative" of Hindu opinion.

Once he realised that his direct interest in journalism provoked opposition both from the Hindu reactionaries and Company officials, Ram Mohun Roy kept himself in the background and encouraged others who were progressing in the same direction as he wanted to. The newspapers with which he was associated strongly protested against the deportation of Silk Buckingham and he was the inspiration behind many newspapers which dominated the newspaper world of Calcutta for a long time. It was his friend and collaborator, Dhirendranath Tagore who opened his purse to both English and Indian newspapers when they were under financial strain. Roy, with his varied interests and numerous activities, could not be shaken by his small-minded opponents whose campaign of vilification seemed to have stopped at nothing.

Ram Mohun Roy stood for a free press. He said : "Every good ruler must be conscious of the great liability to err in managing the affairs of a vast empire and, therefore, he will be anxious to afford to every individual the readiest means

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of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestrained liberty of publication is the only effective means that can be employed." He said that Indians should be told of the excellent institutions of the English and the struggles in other countries to restrain despotism and avert anarchy and that the rulers should be made aware of the grievances of their subjects. He said the people looked to the king of England to remedy the evils perpetrated by the administration in India. In his petition to the king against the rejection of his protest by the Calcutta Supreme Court against the press regulations, Roy referred to him as the "Liberator of Europe".

One writer described Roy as "Mohun Roy, Hindu reformer, searcher after truth, universalist and staunch champion of freedom everywhere and in all spheres." The newspapers which he sponsored or which followed him propagated his political philosophy which could be summarised as follows : he favoured a policy of "judicious colonisation" of India by Europeans with education and capital in order to expand India's contacts with the West, obtain England's technical knowledge, ensure closer contacts with England. He believed that independence of the American colonies had been brought about by bad administration and he saw no reason why with liberal administration, India should not be content to remain with Britain even if there was a large increase in the European element. Jeremy Bentham, the English writer, admired Roy's writing and said of his English "which but for the name of a Hindu, I should certainly have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly educated and instructed Englishman."

Ram Mohun Roy was fully conscious of the political transformation along national lines then taking place in Europe but he was actually conscious of the extreme backwardness of India in just those areas which provided the basis for that transformation. He felt that until that process had reached an advanced stage, India should be governed by the wisdom of the English monarch and his Parliament acting through the East India Company's officers. He, however, felt that Indian opinion as voiced by newspapers and in direct

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petitions and in evidence before commissions should be given proper weight and attention. According to one writer : "His reliance on the British Parliament for arbitration of political conflict, redress of popular grievances and guidance on constitutional advancement was not widely challenged in India even at the end of the century. His genius lay partly in his ability to use arguments which met Western intellectual standards, thereby appealing to both the British and other newly influencial groups of educated Indians."

Roy's high standard of political leadership and writing became the intellectual basis of later political activity. The standard was Western, not Indian. He founded no political party but his political doctrines were the keystone of liberalism and individualism in the 19th century. The beginnings of modern political thought and the struggle for individual rights were seen in his plea for political reform, an end to racial discrimination in court procedure, consultation with Indians before legislation, admission of Indians to higher jobs in the administration and most important, freedom of the press from arbitrary Government regulations. He was devoted to the principles of constitutional monarchy as obtained in Britain and he believed that political progress in India could be achieved by operating within the British system. Indian leaders after him, however much they criticised it, found ample opportunities to fight for their aims without breaking out of the system. Indians did not want to end British rule but wanted, in the words of one writer, "to increase the advantages for themselves under it. Most of them believed there was no alternative system of administration that could possibly maintain the unity, security, and social progress which the British Government had undertaken to provide."

As a social reformer, Roy's aim was to provide a synthesis between the new liberal world of the West and Hinduism. In the words of one biographer : "He maintained that the core of Hindu thought was both moral and rational and, therefore, could come together with the moral rationalisms of the West. His main contribution was to show the way to the reconciliation of political aims that were Western

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in direction and inspiration with certain elements in the traditional Hindu pattern—to show, in fact, that it was possible to agitate for liberal democracy without ceasing to be an Indian. Such an apparently simple premise was to produce a nationalist movement based widely upon a continuing tradition yet forward looking and progressive, its political demands readily comprehensible to the rulers."

Roy's campaign against Hindu society as he saw it and his appeal for purification of Hinduism which culminated in the founding of the Brahmo Samaj echoed throughout the century after his death from the lips and pages of his followers. In a letter he wrote to a friend in 1828, he said : "I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interest. The distinction of castes introducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions among them has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and laws of purification have totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort."

In the second half of the century and in the decades when Indians were striving to organise a nationalist movement, the social revolt grew in intensity and led to social reform campaigns in the press and platform. Political reform occupied much less importance in the public and private lives of Indians than religious and social reform movements. In the words of a historian of this period: "Religious and social reform movements represented two of the main areas of intellectual and practical endeavour for educated Indians. These movements were preoccupied with revolts against existing religious and social institutions and efforts to reform them according to the needs of individuals and small local groups."

The infant Indian press of this century reflected this trend among the intellectuals and leaders of the community. Political agitation did not assume that urgency and expansion as it did towards the closing decades of the century when the priorities

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were reversed and political ideas and goals became paramount. Nationalist political thought then came to exert a moulding influence on religion and social ideas and the methods of political organisation and propagation began to be evolved on an all-India basis.

The first Indian-owned English daily, the *Bengal Gazette* was published in Calcutta in 1816 by Gangadhar Bhattacharjee, a teacher who was influenced by Ram Mohun Roy's teachings. It is not quite certain how long it lasted. Some have claimed it continued to be published for four years but the generally accepted view is that it did not last more than a year. According to one writer: 'The first Indian journalist seems to have represented a school of thought—progressive Hinduism—rather than commercial or individual interest. It is probable that Ram Mohun Roy was responsible for the venture but he may have avoided open association with it for various reasons."

The *Sambad Kaumudi*, the Bengali weekly conducted by Ram Mohun Roy followed the *Bengal Gazette* but controversy surrounds its editor and the year of its publication. According to James Silk Buckingham, it was started in December, 1821, and shut down by its proprietor for want of encouragement in May, 1822. But it was kept alive by another native till the following September, when its publication was suspended, to rise no more. Many writers assert that the first 13 issues of *Sambad Kaumudi* were edited by a man called Bhowani Charan Bannerjee, but a contemporary journalist, Dutt, dismissed the claim as "wicked and malicious fabrication of falsehood." The generally accepted view is that Mohun Roy was the moving spirit behind the weekly and that Bannerjee had worked with him for some time before joining the anti-reformist camp among the Hindus who started a weekly, *Samachar Chandrika.*

Mohun Roy, as we have seen, launched a Persian weekly, *Mirat ul Akhbar* for the benefit of Indians not conversant with English or Bengali. He also brought out a religious periodical, the *Brahminical Magazine*, to counteract the missionaries' propaganda. In April, 1818, William Corey and John Clark Marshman established *Friend of India*, an English monthly,

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which was later bought by Robert Knight, founder of *Statesman*. The same proprietors were the owners of the Bengali newspaper, *Samachar Durpan* which besides being a vehicle for missionary propaganda, specialised in publishing district news which made it popular among officials and educated Indians. And it also had official support.

Ram Mohun Roy's campaign against sati which provoked Hindu orthodoxy into opposition gave a fillip to language journalism but most of the journals which sprang up during this period were shortlived primarily because of the abolition of *sati* by Lord Bentinck. In 1855, an English writer noted that the *Samachar Chandrika*, which was exposing the orthodox causes, "occasionally barks, but is toothless now, having lost to the reformers." Three journals, all connected with Ram Mohun Roy, the *Reformer*, the *Inquirer* and the *Gyan Auneshun*, representing the school of progressive Hindu journalism held the field in Bengal till as late as 1891.

Language journals in Bengal carried articles and views on Hindu social customs, on government, on need for medical education and philanthropy along with local and foreign news, shipping intelligence and market prices. There were editorials against rival newspapers, criticism of government and ventilation of public grievances. There was less of news from other parts of India than from abroad. Company officials continued to fret and fume against what they called the "licentiousness of the press". They would not tolerate an Indian editor criticising the government even as they disapproved of European journalists indulging in it. Their chagrin, however, was that while the offending Europeans could be deported the Indians could not be proceeded against. Up to 1816, there were no Indian proprietors or editors of newspapers. Between 1816 and 1820, there was only one Indian-owned weekly in Calcutta. The Europeans controlled the press during the first 40 years of its existence.

The Indian press in Bengal and Bombay continued to function in the face of official harassment and hostility. Between 1831 and 1833, there were 19 new journals published in Bengal. According to one writer there were during this

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period, 33 English newspapers and 16 Bengali journals. Among the factors which helped the growth of newspapers were the extension of English education among Indians and the increasing interest taken by British journalists in Indian affairs.

A notable personality in Bengal journalism was Dwarkanath Tagore who started the *Bengal Herald*, an English weekly and *Banga Doot* in Bengali. He gave financial assistance to a number of newspapers, among them the *Englishman*, when a crisis overtook them in 1830 and he was responsible for saving many from extinction. An English weekly, the *Hindu Patriot* started in Calcutta in 1853 by Girish Chandra Ghosh, which had profound influence on later day events in Bengal, began shakily. Harichandra Mukherjee, a clerk in a government office, took it over two years later and the journal began to prosper under his care. Mukherjee was a forceful writer and he published articles on the deplorable conditions in indigo plantations which led to the government appointing an enquiry commission. After Mukherjee's death the *Patriot* passed into the hands of the social reformer, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar who appointed Kristo Pal, a well remembered name in early Indian journalism, as editor in 1861. Pal served the paper until his death in 1884. Another well known journal of this period, *Indian Mirror*, an English fortnightly, was, started by Manmohan Ghosh in 1861. Keshub Chunder Sen who took over the *Mirror* in 1871, converted it into a daily, the only such newspaper to be owned and conducted by an Indian. Keshub Chunder Sen also owned the Bengali journal, *Sulab Samachar* which was priced at one pice and had a circulation of 4,000 which must be considered phenomenal for that time.

The Indian language press was slow in growing outside Bengal and Bombay before the Mutiny of 1857. What journals there were, were run by missionaries. In Madras, there were two weeklies and a quarterly in Tamil, one weekly in Telugu and one in English. These were subsidised by the government partly for educational and partly for administrative reasons.

What was the attitude of the Indian press to the alien rulers at this stage of its development? It was clear that while some sections of it might have been anti-government, it

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was not anti-British and there was no suggestion that British rule must be ended. As we have seen, an important group led by Ram Mohun Roy actively campaigned for British contacts and support to British parliamentary institutions. Typical of the Indian faith in the British sovereign was this editorial in a Bengali newspaper : 'Henceforth...if any evil befall us we shall not sit down in silence but weep so loud that our cries may reach our sovereign. And if we live in happiness we shall so tumultuously make known our gladness that the praises of our benefactors may sound throughout the world.'

A staunch friend of the press during this period was Sir Charles Metcalfe, senior member of the governor-general's council and later acting governor-general. He stood for the freedom of the press and was instrumental in shaping the views of Lord Bentinck, governor-general, on this question. Thanks to Metcalfe, Bentinck not only followed a policy of tolerance towards the press but also actively assisted it. When leaders of the Indian and European press in Calcutta submitted to him a petition in 1835 seeking the repeal of the restrictions on the press, Bentinck assured them that a system would be evolved which, while it gave security to every person engaged in the fair discussion of public measures, would effectively secure the government against sedition and individuals against calamity. He told them that the government had no intention of restricting the liberty which they already enjoyed.

Metcalfe, when he succeeded Bentinck for a short period, directed him Law Counsellor, Macaulay, to frame an appropriate law changing licensing of press to registration. Macaulay favoured a uniform law for all the Company's territories which leave the journalist free to print without permission but still render him liable for punishment for printing seditious or defamatory material. A law on these lines was passed by Metcalfe and he earned the gratitude of the press. Metcalfe said: "Do what we will, we cannot prevent the progress of knowledge and it is undoubtedly our duty to promote it whatever be the consequences." He spurned the advice of his counsellors for special vigilance over the Indian language press and said there would not be any discrimination, as

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between Indian and English newspapers. He held that an administration which depended on attempt to suppress public opinion could not be lasting both because "such a tenure must be rotten and because such attempts must fail." By promulgating the law relaxing the restrictions of the press which continued to be in force till 1856, Metcalfe earned the disapproval of the Board of Directors at home who charged him with going back on past directives. But Metcalfe would not relent and thereby he lost the chance of being the governor-general permanently. One writer has described him as "the great liberator of the Indian press who sacrificed his career but who launched Indian journalism on its long and eventful journey."

A great transformation came in the official attitude to the Indian press after the Mutiny (also called the first War of Independence) in 1857. The Indian press in Bengal, Bombay and Madras took little interest in the Mutiny and there was no indication of unrest that was seen in the Company's army. In the words of a writer: "The Mutiny was of little significance for the press but what was far more important was its consequences." The English-owned press went crazy and blood thirsty and displayed the worst forms of racialism. The newspapers denounced the policy of conciliation pursued by Lord Canning, governor-general and indulged in intemperate abuse of Indians. There was nothing comparable to their virulence on the side of the Indian press.

The Mutiny drove a wedge between the English-owned and Indian-owned newspapers and created a distinction between English language and Indian language journals. The gulf widened thereafter year after year between the Anglo-Indian press (as it came to be called) and the nationalist press and reached its climax in the freedom movement launched from 1920 onwards by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi. George Trevelyan wrote six years after the Mutiny : "The tone of the press was horrible. Never did the cry for blood swell so loud as among the Christians and Englishmen...Because the pampered Bengali sepoys had behaved like double-eyed rascals, every Hindu and Musalman

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was a rebel, a traitor, a murderer; every newspaper column teemed with invectives which at the time seemed coarse and tedious but which we must now pronounce as wicked and blasphemous."

One historian of this period noted that long after the last rebel had laid down his arms, been hanged or vanished into the jungles, the Calcutta English-owned press continued its ferocious tirades. "The non-official population was encouraged to believe in a maudlin government, pre-rebel in sympathy, unpatriotic and radical." When for five years "this chorus of abuse and these cries for blood" had continued, it so happened that an Englishman was arrested for murdering one of his employees. And when he was tried and duly convicted, the English-owned press "burst out into a deafening scream". The *Bengal Hurkaru* suddenly became a champion of abolition of capital punishment. It organised processions and mass meetings of Europeans "to achieve the gain of a human life, an existence which is forfeit to the public strangler". When the government refused to yield to the clamour of the white press, the newspapers turned their guns on the officials who they alleged were devotees of the Goddess Kali to whom they wanted to sacrifice the "wretched" life of the man convicted for murder.

Here is another description of the English press reaction in Calcutta : "The most peaceful and charitable gentlemen fell into conclusions of race hatred. Everywhere retribution torture was advocated.... The English press discussed the situation with a ferocious hysteria compared to which Gen. Geering's most unbalanced outbursts would seem polite commonplaces." Hymns of hate usurped the Poet's Corner of the *Englishman*. Cried one poet :

Barring Humanity —Pretenders
To Hell of none are we the
willing senders
But if to sepoys entrance must
Be given
Locate them, Lord, in the back
slums of heaven.

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When Lord Canning, governor-general, promulgated a press law in 1857 imposing restrictions on the entire press (that is, both English-owned and Indian-owned) there was a hue and cry in the English press in Calcutta. But it was not only his profound sense of justice and his antipathy to racial discrimination which prompted Canning to include the English-owned press under the new law but his own disquieting observation that the English press was not free from the things which the Indian press had been accused of. He said : "While I am glad to give credit to the conductors of the European press for the loyalty and intelligence which mark their labours, I am bound by sincerity to say that I have seen passages in some of the papers under their management which though perfectly innocuous as far as European readers are concerned, may in times like the present, be turned into the most mischievous purposes in the hands of persons capable of dressing them up for the native ear."

Referring to the Indian press in a letter to the president of the Board of Directors at home, Canning said : "As regards the native press I shall be surprised if even in England there are two opinions as to the propriety of the measure. The mischief which such writings as these which I send you do amongst the ignorant and childish but excitable sepoys and the fanatical Mohemedans will be easily understood; especially when it is known that they are eagerly sought and listened to by the native soldiers. I consider this evil is one which cannot in the present state of India be allowed to continue without positive guiltiness on the part of the government. Therefore, I have not hesitated to take the power of arresting it by the only means which will be summary and efficient. As to the English press, it has no claim to exemption. If it were read only by English readers something might be urged in its defence. . . . But the articles of the English newspapers are translated into the native languages and read by all." Lady Canning noted in her diary ; "The English press has been very bad; civil enough to see himself but running down others—but that is not the mischief—it points out all sorts of imaginary reasons and grievances as causes for Mutiny. It spreads alarms

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and shows up weakness and gives information which, translated, may do untold mischief among the natives. The *Friend of India*, weekly paper that thinks itself as great here as the *Times* of London, one day gave a long detailed account of the position of the whole of the English troops and the tracks of unprotected country and told exactly how vulnerable we were and must be until such and such reinforcements arrive. . . . Now this was put forth at the most ticklish moment three weeks ago and no doubt was instantly circulated and studied all over the country by the seditious. Treachery is not worse than such exceeding folly."

There was a spirit of revenge in the air among the British and Canning remarked : "There is no doubt that many of the commissioners and commissions acted in a spirit of zeal or revenge which transcended any ordinary canons of justice and evidence. These emotions were often aroused by stories of outrages by rebels which had no basis in fact."

An editor of a Calcutta English-owned newspaper got hold of a secret circular of Canning to his officers and dashed off an editorial. "Leniency towards any portion of the conspirator", he wrote, "is misplaced, impolitic and iniquitous and is calculated to excite contempt and invite attack on every side by showing to the world the Government of India so powerless to punish mutiny or so indifferent to the sufferings which have been endured by the victims of the rebellion that it allows the blood of English and Christian subjects of Her Majesty to flow in torrents and their wives and sisters and daughters to be outraged and dishonoured without adequate retribution."

In desperation Canning wrote to a friend in London : "For God's sake raise your voice and stop this. As long as I have breath in my body I will pursue no other policy . . . but because it is just I will not govern in anger." In a letter to the Queen he said : "There is a rabid and indiscriminate vindictiveness abroad even amongst many who ought to set a better example, which it is impossible to contemplate without something like a policy of shame for one's fellow countrymen. . . nor does it occur to those who talk and write most upon the matter that for the sovereign of England to hold and govern India without

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employing, and to a great degree, trusting natives both in civil and military service, is simply impossible. It is no exaggeration to say that a vast number of the European community would hear with pleasure and approval that every Hindu and Mohamedan had been proscribed and that none would be admitted to serve the government except in a menial capacity." Canning said that the constant vilification of the government by the European press had a mischievous effect on the natives and was leading them by degrees to lose all respect for authority.

According to an English writer, the native (Indian) press throughout this period "though viewing affairs from an oriental than an English standpoint, has maintained, on the whole, a moderate tone. . . . We have frequently observed with natives that read English newspapers a feeling of indignation against Europeans which exist only in a modified degree amongst natives whose reading is in vernacular channels." The same writer said that Indian language journals gave a picture of the issues that were warmly contested in Hindu society, of the grievances of the people, of the disadvantages of having a foreign language as the language of the courts, of the atrocities of Indigo planters and the blunders of young magistrates.

While the fears of the rulers about the Indian press were not based on facts, they failed to see that protection was required from the provocative writings of the English press. The *Friend of India* and the Englishman in Calcutta, and the *Bombay Times* in Bombay had, in fact, been issued warnings by the authorities for their virulent attack on the natives but the English editors were excused after assurances had been given by the proprietors, and the only Bengal newspaper whose licence was revoked was the *Bengal Hurkaru*. The concessions given to the European community by Canning's government and the bias in the practical implementation of the policy of conciliation estranged Indian feelings still further, and the gulf between the native and the European press grew wider and wider, never to be bridged. The Indian press far from being regarded as an instrument for progress was regarded with

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suspicion by the authorities and these newspapers which were organs of progressive opinion were specially suspect. According to an Indian historian : "The Queen's Proclamation (1858) gave new hope but soon gave rise to disappointment and disillusion when British implementation lagged behind the promise...Indian opinion was forming slowly. This period saw a national awakening and this was the beginning of the era of the great national newspaper."

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4

BATTLE FOR SOCIAL REFORM

If Calcutta was the birthplace of Indian journalism, Bombay was the citadel from where the Indian press launched its social reform movement. The ranks of the social reformers included such giants as Karsondas Mulji, Gopal Rao Hari Deshmukh, Behram Malabari, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Dadabhai Naoroji. In the years preceding the Mutiny and for many years after it, social reform was the main interest of the language press in Bombay.

Bal Sastri Jambhekar started the first Anglo-Marathi fortnightly in 1832 and the Marathi monthly *Dig* in 1842. The *Prabhakar* was another journal which was in the forefront of social reform and which published contributions regularly from Gopal Rao Hari Deshmukh. Deshmukh who began life as a translator in the office of the Deccan Sardars and Inamdars, rose rapidly to be a sessions judge from which post he retired in 1879. He was greatly interested in social reform and wrote to a number of newspapers and was associated with a number of them including the *Dnyaprakash*, *Induprakash* and *Lokahitavadi*. He held that British presence in India was a good and beneficent influence and he wanted social reform with the aid of the British.

In the *Induprakash*, which Deshmukh started in 1861 (which was an Anglo-Marathi daily), M.G. Ranade ran an English column and Vishu Shastri Pandit was its editor. The main emphasis of the paper was on social reform. It was a time when all the leading intellectuals of western India had, at one time or another in their life been attracted by journalism which they regarded as the most convenient medium to propagate their views and appeal to the people. Ranade fully realised the influence of the press and throughout his life made as much

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use of it as he did of the platform. On one occasion he protested in his column against the insolent behaviour of a British official and this led to the government warning the official to change his attitude to the people. He campaigned, among other things, for widow remarriage. As a result of his sustained efforts an association was started for promoting widow remarriages.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale called Ranade "the central sun from whom they derived their light and warmth and around whom they moved, each in his own orbit and at his own distance. The feeling of devotion he was able to inspire in such men was most marvellous and to those young workers who were privileged to come into intimate personal contact with him, his word was law and his approbation their highest reward." Ranade helped the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona to organise a conference of journalists working on language papers which considered measures to mobilise public opinion against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

About this time, Tilak and his associate Agarkar were making plans to start the *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Mahratta* (English) in Poona, and Ranade was consulted. Ranade enthusiastically supported them and said that a national press and national education were potent means for national uplift. He drafted the resolution passed at a meeting held in Poona to protest against the Press Act and the memorandum to be submitted to the Governor-General, Lord Lytton. He said the Government had misunderstood the writings in the Indian language papers. He mentioned the warning given to the *Induprakash* by the Bombay police commissioner and the suppression of the Poona paper, *Kiran* and said that the action against a number of newspapers under the Act was unjustified and undeserved.

Dadabhai Naoroji, the great nationalist leader, became the editor of a newspaper, *Rast Goftar* which was started in 1851 by Khurshedji Cama, with the object of promoting social reform. A women's journal, *Stri Bodh* was launched with the same object in 1857. One of the contributors to these journals was the great social reformer, Karsondas Mulji, who himself

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started in 1852 a journal called, *Satya Prakash*. Bal Sastri Jambhekar and his associates dominated the language press from 1832 to 1853 and thereafter Karsondas Mulji from 1853 to 1870. The Hindu reformers of the Prarthana Samaj (Bombay version of the Brahmo Samaj) then came on the scene.

Between 1884 and 1891, the great social reformer, Behram Malabari carried on a raging campaign through the press for removing the abuses and evils in Hindu society. Malabari and Karsondas together waged a relentless battle against social wrongs though each did it in his own peculiar way. Karsondas was a practical reformer who was moved by the sufferings of the downtrodden and oppressed in Hindu society. Malabari organised a country-wide agitation for abolishing the practice of child marriage and he made English his tool, realising its importance as an instrument to approach people all over the country. Karsondas moved from widow remarriage and education of girls to an attack on the priests in his own community (Vaishnava-Vallabh) for their autocratic ways and methods. Both Malabari and Karsondas were admirers of everything English. While Karsondas' enthusiasm for England and the English did little more than create personal difficulties for him, Malabari's fervour created an early rift between him and the Ranade group of reformers, which took time to heal. Karsondas' attacks on the priests in his community led to a communication and a libel suit which cost him dearly.

A hero of the language press during this period was the patriot and revolutionary, Wasudeeo Balwant Phadke (1845-1883), who was proclaimed a rebel by the government, out to overthrow the government. The English educated Indians of Pune were suspected to be in league with the rebel and among those whose names were mentioned by the European papers of Bombay was Ranade, who, it was alleged, while outwardly professing loyalty to the government was inwardly "consumed by a desire to do away with the British government!" Phadke has been described as a man whose "meteorite career is remarkable as much for his dauntless foolhardiness and utter miscalculation of the power of those whom he

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regarded as his enemies as for his complete selflessness and unsullied patriotism."

Failing to rouse the literate and educated in his campaign to overthrow the foreign government he turned to the illiterate masses and organised dacoities to collect money for his militia. He was captured in 1879 and sentenced to transportation for life. He was removed to Aden where he died in 1883. The *Induprakash* and *Deccan Star* reported that an Englishwoman presented flowers to the prisoner at Pune railway station out of sheer admiration. The *Induprakash*, with which Ranade was closely associated wrote in November, 1879 : "When Wasudeo was carried from the court after his conviction some people in the crowd shouted 'success to Wasudeo.' Upon this the arch enemies of Brahmans at once declared that the Brahmans of Pune were favourable to Wasudeo's enterprise. If this reasoning is valid, a conclusion equally unfavourable to Europeans could be drawn from a fact which has been published. When Wasudeo was brought to Pune railway station after his conviction, a European lady presented him with a bunch of flowers. From this incident it might be inferred with equal justice that European ladies were favourable to Wasudeo's cause. But no sane person would dream of drawing this inference. If this is so, the other opinion with respect to Brahmans is equally untenable."

The *Deccan Star* wrote : "In the eyes of his countrymen Wasudeo Balwant Phadke did not commit any wrong... Wasudeo, though a Brahman, showed a truly Christian spirit when he tried to relieve the misery of his countrymen. Wasudeo deserves the highest praise not only from all natives but even from Englishmen who wish for the prosperity of H.M.'s eastern empire. By sacrificing himself he has averted danger which sooner or later must follow intolerable oppression. We consider him as the harbinger of a bright future for India."

Dadabhai Naoroji's own monthly journal, the *Voice of India* came out on February 1, 1882. It declared its object to be to secure a fair hearing and justice for India. It published a digest of all important news and views which appeared in

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Indian journals. It was intended to reflect the opinion of the Indian press. During Dadabhai's absence from India, Malabari was in charge of it and in 1890 it was merged with Malabari's weekly *Spectator*.

Far away in the southern presidency of Madras, the battle for social reform was taken up by *The Hindu* through the valiant efforts of its editor, G. Subramania Aiyer. This great national newspaper which was started as a weekly in 1878 by Subramania Aiyer and five other young men, waged its fight to rid Hinduism of its social evils in the face of bitter opposition from Hindu orthodoxy which ultimately led to the severance of his connection with the paper by the editor. *The Hindu* wrote in 1889 : "We shall advocate with all our weight and influence such social reforms as are absolutely needed to give unity and harmony to our life under existing conditions even though we know that by doing so we shall array against ourselves in powerful antagonism, the followers and upholders of orthodoxy." Among the reforms for which the paper campaigned were widow remarriage, raising the age of marriage, abolition of caste and uplift of the untouchables. *The Hindu's* crusade was so much out of tune with the spirit of the time that it affected its business side and the paper began to lose circulation and advertisements. Subramania Aiyer set a personal example in social reform by solemnising the marriage of his widowed daughter in Bombay in the presence of leading social reformers of the country.

The social reformers were successful in having the Age of Consent Bill passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in 1891 in the teeth of opposition by a section of Hindus. The bill sought to raise the age of consummation of marriage from 10 (as fixed in the Act of 1860) to 12. The chief campaigner for the reform was B.M. Malabari, who wanted that child marriage should be denounced in school text-books and married students should not be allowed to sit for university examinations. He also wanted that preference should be given to bachelors in government appointments and that child widows should be protected by the state against "social ill-usage". The press in Calcutta was generally opposed to the bill and carried

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on a vigorous campaign against it, while in Maharashtra it led to a major collision between the forces of Hindu orthodoxy led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the party of social reform led by Malabari.

The Hindu supported the bill and welcomed the government's intervention. The paper noted that in one part of the city where child marriage was being performed, graduates in the neighbourhood had refused to attend it on the grounds that they felt bound to discourage such marriages as much as possible. *The Hindu* praised them and said : "This reflects honour on their education, and it is to be hoped that when their time comes to get their daughters or sisters married, they will remember the importance of consistency in their conduct."

Malabari's drive for social reform was exploited by the government to divert public opinion from political questions, Sir Auckland Colvin, finance member of the Governor-General's Council, said: "The Indian press should confine itself to social reform, the merits of which it thoroughly understands than in wasting itself in barron philippics against English rule and English character." The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote in 1895: "A dozen years ago when educated men sat together they talked of politics; now, generally speaking, they talk of religion." A.O. Hume, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, accused Motilal Ghose, editor of the *Patrika*, of deliberately whipping up opposition to the Age of Consent Bill "to gather public support for the conversion of his newspaper from a weekly into a daily."

The leading social reformers of Bombay, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, who was a pioneer journalist of Maharashtra, and M.G. Ranade, were ardent believers in the British connection and were politically very much on the rulers' side. Deshmukh, a Chitpavan Brahmin, a community which was to figure later in acts of terrorism, welcomed the British conquest of India and said it had put an end to anarchy and introduced standards of administration and public life far superior to those of autocratic and feudal regimes under which the country had suffered for centuries. In the columns of his journal, *Prabhakar*, he

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expressed admiration for the British principles of equality before law, freedom of speech and the belief that the state existed for the welfare of the people. He thought that foreign rule with all its defects was a necessary stage in the training of the people for self-government. He said that western political institutions could not be introduced in India without purging Hindu society of social evils and antiquated customs which imposed disabilities on women and the low castes.

Ranade thought that the British connection was part of a "disciplining process" coming as it did through the example and teaching of the most gifted and free nation of the world. According to Gokhale, Ranade saw that "an ancient race had come in contact with another, possessing a more vigorous if somewhat more materialistic civilisation and if we did not altogether want to be submerged or overwhelmed, it was necessary for us to assimilate what was noble and what was vigorous in the new influences operating upon us, preserving at the same time what was good and noble in our own system." Ranade said the transition was to be from "constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised life to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a sense of human dignity."

A governor who provided fodder for the language press by his eccentric actions and behaviour was Sir George Campbell (1873), Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. "He squirmed under their writings", a writer has noted. He persecuted the press and sought the governor-general's permission to forge new legislation against them. Recalling these days in his memoirs later, Campbell wrote: "A government whose position largely depends on the strength of moral force due to a belief in its unassailable power, can hardly afford to be constantly held up to the contempt of its subjects. Then as ever we were a good deal troubled by abusive and sometimes seditious attacks on the governing powers. It was then the practice to make a precis of the notable writings of the native press for the information of government officials and others and the offensive

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titbits were then carefully reproduced and so given a circulation which they would never otherwise have had. We used to think that such things were not infrequently written in the hope that they would thus be circulated; indeed, I have known the writer to call the attention of the compiler of the precis in so many words in a native kind of way. We found it desirable to discontinue the circulation." However, the Governor-General Lord Northcote, thought Campbell was a little too sensitive on the subject.

One of the Indian editors who got into trouble with Campbell was Kristodas Pal, editor of *Hindu Patriot*. He was charged by the governor with having shown 'ill-will' towards the government. In an effective reply Pal put some questions to the governor. "The words 'ill-will to government' are not explicit. Is the word government in the phrase intended to mean the Queen's Government or the local administration? The ruling power or the executive agency? The sovereign mistress of the Empire or her officers in the country? None is better aware than His Honour that the supreme power and the administrative authority are quite distinct; and nowhere is this distinction made so broadly and clearly as in England. When for instance Mr. Disraeli denounced the other day the present government of Her Majesty as 'blundering and plundering', it would be a gross perversion of language to interpret this as 'ill-will to government', that is, sovereign authority, the Queen herself. And yet I fear the charge against the *Patriot* involves the misuse of words. It would be impertinent for me to remark that if criticisms of public men and measures be constructed into 'ill-will to government' there is not a single journal in this country with the slightest pretence to independence, which would not be open to this charge. Constituted as the British Government in India is, in which the governed millions are utterly unrepresented and which is administered by aliens in birth, religion, habits, sentiments, and feelings, the press is the only channel for the communication of the views and wishes of the people—the safety valve so to speak of the political steam working in the body of the masses. None is better aware

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than my humble self that the native press has many shortcomings; that it has much to learn and unlearn; but nothing, I respectfully submit, could be more unjust than to ascribe to it 'ill-will to government' because it considers its duty to criticise the proceedings of the local administration or particular officers of the government."

What were the grievances of the Indian (native) press in 1867 ? They were listed by William Digby, a friend of India and former editor of the Madras-Mail. "The native press in 1867", he said, "formulated their grievances under two heads with both of which all who are in any degree acquainted with present day Indian politics must be familiar. First, that the British Government does not sufficiently associate in its administrative system the native gentry and the more respectable classes. Secondly, that the British Government does not allot to natives an adequate share of public patronage and does not promote them sufficiently to lucrative offices in their own country. These complaints, in spite of all the remedial legislation of the intervening years, in spite of Lord Ripon's noble efforts in a like direction, are, if anything, more true and more evil in influence in 1885 than they were in 1867."

The *Times of India* reproduced in its columns in February, 1884, a sample of writing in an Indian newspaper, the *Indian Spectator*. It was an introduction to an article on Calcutta and it began: "Here am I, like the celebrated donkey (the more shame to myself) of whom we have read so often in misty metaphysics—here am I at a loss to select some provender for your readers out of so many well matched, well assorted varieties. Why not begin by saying that Calcutta in a manner of speaking makes a Bully Bottom of a man, that one can only describe her by first of all writing himself down as an ass. I don't mean to say that the few writers on this subject have all been more or less noodles or numbskulls. Nor do I imply that there is anything in the climate of Calcutta to induce an asinine tendency though some wags do say so in connection with many of the incidents of the Ilbert Bill agitation. What I do mean is that Calcutta is a bit of befooling subject and I am not quite

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sure whether I will not be judged a fool for my pains by those 'cutthroat bandits in the path of fame' as the Laureate mildly calls your public critics. But ambition 'pricks me on'—and he must needs go whom she drives. I will not yet overleap myself, though I am taking you, I am afraid, to a pretty dizzy eminence."

The *Times of India's* comment: "The sooner, however, that a writer like this overleaps himself and has done with, is the better we fancy for his readers, if he has any."

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5

RUDYARD KIPLING, THE JOURNALIST

By the latter half of the 19th century, the European owned press, which came to be called the Anglo-Indian press, had consolidated its position and influence even as its Indian counterpart was struggling to stand on its feet. The Anglo-Indian papers were distributed in all major cities and centres where the European community, both official and non-official, was strong. Thus, there were three of them in Calcutta, two in Bombay, two in Madras, one in Lahore and one in Allahabad. The support of the business community was an important factor in the growth and stability of these papers. They were stronger in Calcutta because of the absence of a virile Indian business community than in Bombay, where even in the initial stages they had a measure of Indian support. The most notable among them were the *Englishman* and *Statesman* of Calcutta, the *Times of India* of Bombay, the *Madras Times* and the *Madras Mail* of Madras, the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore and the *Pioneer* of Allahabad. Two of them, the *Statesman* and the *Times of India*, have changed into Indian hands and survived unto our day.

The most important personality connected with the growth of the Anglo-Indian press in this period was Robert Knight, founder of the *Statesman* in 1875. Before he came to Calcutta, Knight served for some time as editor of the *Bombay Times*. He had come to Bombay as an agent of an European firm and contributed articles to the *Bombay Times*. The owners of the paper were impressed with his ability and knowledge and made him editor. Knight's editorials were characterised by balance and moderation and, therefore, were very effective. In 1861, he was successful in bringing about a merger of the *Bombay Times* and two other Bombay papers, the *Standard* and the *Telegraph*

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and renamed it the *Times of India*. In 1868, he sold his shares in the paper to his partner Mathias Mull and started the *Bombay Statesman*, which he sold some years later. Knight shifted his activities to Calcutta where he started a monthly journal, the *Indian Economist*. At the same time, he entered government service as an under-secretary in the Agricultural Department of the Bengal Government. He produced the *Agricultural Gazette of India*. He got into trouble with officialdom when he criticised in both journals the famine relief measures of the government. The propriety of a government servant running a newspaper was raised and Knight resigned his job in 1874. In January, 1875 he started the *Indian Statesman* which was changed to *Statesman* eight months later. While its rivals, the *Englishman* and the *Indian Daily News*, were sold at four annas a copy, the *Statesman* was priced at one anna. Knight bought the *Friend of India*, published in Serampore by missionaries, brought it to Calcutta and eventually merged it with the *Statesman*. He introduced the Sunday newspaper with features and articles of popular interest and very soon the *Statesman* became the leader of the Anglo-Indian press in Calcutta.

Knight had shown his versatility as a journalist even while in Bombay. He was responsible for awakening public opinion, campaigning for measures to protect the health of Bombay citizens and reduce the heavy mortality rate, and care of destitute Europeans. He claimed he had remedied many private wrongs "which I have made my own." He said: "Men come to me almost by instinct when they think they have been wronged. They know that if I am convinced, I shall certainly try to help them and not readily get tired." In a farewell address (along with a purse for Rs. 1 lakh) presented to him on his departure from Bombay, the citizens said: "You devised means whereby information was gained from every quarter of India. You enlisted able pens. You presented us, almost for the first time, with an adequate and exhaustive discussion of topics lying behind the limited range of the life and experience of the residents in the presidency towns. You, thus, raised the organ you conducted to a position of influence analogous to that of

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the great journals of Europe. You excited a wholesome rivalry amongst your brother journalists. You introduced a policy of wholesome liberality. It is not too much to say that it is in a great measure owing to your example and exertion that the press of India now rests on a broad basis of enlightenment and ability which makes it worthy of the great interests with which it has to deal...It was by the attracting influence of an honest, lofty and generous policy that you continued to draw around you that phalanx of able and thoroughly informed writers who made the *Times of India* arbiter in nearly all the great questions of public policy that have been controverted for some years past."

Knight believed in bringing the Europeans and Indians together and he inspired Anglo-Indian journalists to write on Indian subjects. In the words of an Indian writer: "He was one of the last English journalists who combined professional competence with public activities. He was also the last of the editors of British owned newspapers who believed they owed a duty more to their public than to the unfailing support of the British Government in India."

An English journalist who migrated from Bombay to Calcutta earlier than Knight was J. Stocqueler who took over the newspaper *John Bull* and converted it into the *Englishman*. When he left India in 1842, he handed it over to indigo planters and after further changes it came into the possession of J. O'Brien Saunders. The *Englishman* was bitterly anti-Indian in outlook and policy and had many brushes with India's nationalist leaders in later years.

In Madras, the *Madras Times* was started in 1860 and eight years later the *Madras Mail* appeared as an evening paper. The *Madras Mail* (which was shortened to *The Mail* in the middle of the 20th century) was founded by Sir Charles Lawson and Henry Cornish who had been joint editors of the *Madras Times* and broke away from it owing to differences with the proprietor over the attitude to the administration of Lord Napier governor of Madras. Lawson and Cornish initially faced many difficulties, especially with regard to machinery and staff, but very soon the *Madras Mail* found its feet and became a powerful

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organ of the European business community. In its first editorial, the *Madras Mail* wrote: "Honesty is the best policy of journalism as in other things and though so far regard for this adage has somewhat disconcerted our plans we have not the least doubt but that we shall yet score the rule. We make no special appeal to the public; we do not assume the role of martyrs; we simply base our claim to be heard on the grounds of having a good deal of honest truth to say which shall be said. We are quite aware that as the official elements in this presidency far outnumber the non-officials, the independent line we are determined to take may to some persons seem imprudent if not obnoxious, but we are very sanguine that time will prove very convincingly to everyone who takes any interest in this journal the correctness of our deliberate judgment in the matter. We are afraid that we shall not always avoid saying things that will damage our popularity in certain quarters. We cannot help it."

Lawson was succeeded by a line of talented editors who included K. Beauchamp, T. Earle Welby, A.E. Lawson, William Digby, D. Scott Brenner and A.A. Hayles, who was to be the *Madras Mail's* greatest and last recognised editors. Hayles joined the *Madras Times* in 1912 as a junior reporter and moved over to the *Madras Mail* in 1921 when the *Times* merged with the *Madras Mail.* Hayles was appointed editor in 1928 and held that post even after the paper changed over to Indian hands in 1945. The paper celebrated its centenary in 1948 but was plagued by strikes and financial losses and closed down in 1981 after playing a very controversial but leading role in the vanguard of the Anglo-Indian press in the battle against the nationalists and in support of the British regime.

C.V. Muniswami Aiyer, who was a reporter of the *Madras Mail* in 1892, reported proceedings of the Indian National Congress sessions for many years. At the Surat Congress in 1907, he was asked not to report the speeches of Tilak and his associates lest the C.I.D. should get hold of them and prosecute the Tilakites.

The *Pioneer* was started in Allahabad in 1861 in response to a persistent demand from officials for a government newspaper

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to meet the attacks of the Indian press. The *Pioneer* prided itself on being always the first with official news and boasted of its close ties with top officials.

The *Civil and Military Gazette* came out in Lahore in 1872 and with it were merged a number of other papers like the *Mofussiliten* of Agra (1845), the *Lahore Chronicle* (1846), the *Punjab Times* and the *Indian Public Opinion* (1867). The *C. and M. Gazette* had the distinction of having had on its staff Rudyard Kipling, the great novelist, poet and the author of the couplet: "West is West and East is East and the twain shall never meet". Kipling, who was born in Bombay, was still in his teens when he joined the *C. and M. Gazette* as an assistant to the editor in 1883. He spent seven years in India in this profession which provided him with rich material for his stories, novels and poems. The 17-year-old lad, who had yet to finish his education, was catapulted to Lahore where his father was employed in the museum and worked as assistant to Stephen Wheeler, editor of *C. and M. Gazette*. He was put through the mill by a hard taskmaster who allowed him hardly any time to be on his own. Still, he managed to do some writing, mostly monologues which dealt with fantastic situations. Kipling had a more accommodative editor, Kay Robinson, in 1886 and he got an opportunity to write fiction in the form of turnovers. He moved on to the *Pioneer* after a five-year stint in the *Gazette* and continued his literary labours.

The Indian cities Kipling knew best were Lahore and Allahabad where he worked. His tireless curiosity, his zest for all he saw, gave him abundant material. In his night wanderings in Lahore and Allahabad in the remote corners of the cities, he came to know the hidden corners of the multitudes, the bazaars, and haunts of shady characters. He met all kinds of people, outcasts, opium addicts, ladies of easy virtue, whom he dubbed "fat vice" or "dainty iniquity". He would come home just as light broke "in some night hawk of a hired carriage which stank of *hookah* fumes, jasmine flowers and sandalwood and if the driver was moved to talk he told me a great deal."

Kipling went to Simla and mixed with the idle, gossiping

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society of a place which was a holiday resort as well as a centre of government where also as a newspaperman he had contacts with high official circles. Here he "saw and heard the machinery of administration stripped bare". Though underage, he became a Freemason, a society which he found "ignores colour, caste and creed. Here I met Muslims, Sikhs, members of the Arya Samaj and a Jew, Tyler, who was priest and butcher to his little community in Lahore. So yet another world opened to me which I needed." Thus, through various channels in many places, he gathered by sight and experience and hearsay, rich material for his stories which he told with brevity imposed upon him by newspaper needs, with comments —which might be called wisecracks—for which he has often been criticised. He said: "In my craft, a thing done with is done with. We go on to new shapes after that." He found writing and everything associated with it "glorious fun".

Describing his work on the *Pioneer*, Kipling wrote: "I made my own experiments in the weight, colours, perfumes and attributes of words either as read aloud so that they may hold the ear or, scattered over the page, draw the eye. There is no line of my verse or prose which has not been mouthed till the tongue has made all smooth and memory after many recitals has mechanically slipped the grosser superfluities." This was Kipling's tip to reporters: "Take well ground Indian ink as much as suffices and a camel hairbrush proportionate to the intersperces of your lines. In an auspicious hour, read your final draft and consider faithfully every paragraph, sentence and word, blacking out where requisite. Let it lie by to drain as long as possible. At the end of that time, re-read and you should find that it will bear a second shortening. Finally, read it aloud alone and at leisure. May be a shade more brushwork will then indicate or impose itself. If not, praise Allah, and let it go and 'when thou hast done, repent not'."

Kipling so overdid the polishing of his stories that one writer remarked he made the "style too continuously brilliant". "We need roughage", this writer said, "as well as nourishment in a diet. But there is no roughage in a Kipling story." Kipling wrote to a friend in 1896: "I love the fun and riot of writing.

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And there are times when it is just a comfort and delight to let out with the pen and ink as long—as it doesn't do anyone any moral harm." Kipling who was given many roving commissions by the *Pioneer* wrote a series of eight articles and poems on Calcutta in 1889 and 1890. In one of the poems, captioned, "A tale of two cities" (the other city being Simla), Kipling dwells on the physical squalor and loathsome conditions of life in Calcutta, deploring the accident that brought the city into being in the first place and "the avarice that sustains it."

In one of his articles on Calcutta, Kipling called it the "city of dreadful night" and wrote: "In the cosmopolitan Great Eastern Hotel where nationals of all countries are to be found and in the splendid Maidan where expanse dwarfs everything except the row of mansions of Chowringhi and in the palaces themselves which were built in the old times when money was plentiful and which like the houses in hill stations are graced with outside winding service staircases, there is a reeking, ferocious, all pervasive stench worse than the worst odour of Banaras, Peshawar or Bombay. There is no escape from it, no relief except exhaustion, for it is the 'big Calcutta stink', the B.C.S."

Kipling attended a session of the Bengal Legislative Council when it was debating the Calcutta Municipal Bill. These were his impressions: "They have been at it for several Saturdays. Last Saturday, Sir Steuart Bayley (lieutenant governor) pointed out that at their present rate they would be about two years in getting it through." Describing the "sumptuous blue-domed octagonal chamber in a large octagonal wing of Writers Buildings" where the Council met, Kipling wrote: "There are gilt to the half pillars and an Egyptian patterned lotus stencil makes the walls gay....If the work matches the first class furniture, ink pots, the carpets and the resplendent ceilings, there will be something worth seeing. But where is the criminal who is to be hanged for the stench that runs up and down Writers Buildings staircase; for the rubbish heaps in the Chitpore Road; for the sickly savour of Chowringhi...for the street full of small-pox... and for a hundred other things."

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This was Kipling's description of a speaker in the Council; "The speaker is a slight, spare native in a flat bat-turban and a black alpaca frock coat...He talks and talks and talks in a level voice raising occasionally half an octave when a point has to be driven home..." Kipling wrote: "Western education in an exotic plant...we brought it out from England exactly as we brought out the ink bottles and the patterns for the chairs. We planted it and it grew—monstrous as a banian. Now we are choked by the roots of it spreading so thickly in this fat soil of Bengal...Bit by bit we built this dome, visible, and invisible, the crown of Writers Buildings...That torrent of verbiage is ours. We taught him what was constitutional and what was unconstitutional in the days when Calcutta smelt. Calcutta smells still but we must listen to all that he has to say about the plurality of votes and the threshing of wind and the weaving of ropes of sand."

Kipling described his seven years in journalism in India as "seven years hard". Bad health (he suffered from malaria and dysentery), the climate and ambition made him leave India and get back to England via America. He obtained a commission from the *Pioneer* to write a series of letters from America. These letters which were published, were vigorous, uninhibited and said a good deal about America which Americans did not like. Kipling saw the Indian Empire as "a great and beneficent service" to be performed so long as it was allowed to develop "organically under humane and understanding guidance, without interference from people who had no sense of its nature." He left India in March, 1890.

One of the early Indian journalists who made an assessment of the Anglo-Indian press was G. Subramania Aiyar, one of the founders and editor of *The Hindu* who said: "The Anglo-Indian journals are certainly more powerful, more prosperous and more influential than Indian journals. They know their trade and they have got facilities which we have not...Journalism to Englishmen here is more or less a trade, a means of livelihood but to Indians, journalism is something more earnest, something more nearly touching the interests of their country."

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Pat Lovett, editor of the *Times of India*, wrote: "Candour compels the admission that there is far more liberty allowed to the British-owned newspapers than to those edited and owned by Indian nationalists...The Indian press has always been and is today what Surendranath Bannerjee called a 'great instrument of propagandism'; hence the vigilant antipathy of the bureaucracy in marked contrast to the fraternal tolerance extended to the British section...If an administrative measure is attacked by the Indian-edited press, it is the duty of the British-edited press to defend it with all its might."

A subject of controversy which assumed big proportions was racial discrimination which caused widespread resentment, especially in Bengal. The immediate provocation was the dismissal of Surendranath Bannerjee (who later emerged as the great nationalist leader and journalist of Bengal) from the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) for a technical offence and his not being called to the bar after he had worked hard for it. Bannerjee became the focal point for political agitation and the formation of secret societies. He started the daily *Bengalee* which became a powerful organ of nationalist opinion. When Bannerjee was charged with contempt of court for an article published in the *Bengalee* and convicted in 1883, the *Statesman*, alone among the Anglo-Indian press, vigorously protested against the procedure adopted by the Bengal High Court. It wrote: "We regret that both our local contemporaries accord their approval to the proceedings of the High Court in the case of the editor of the *Bengalee*. We feared this for to seem to defend a native editor might at the present time involve certain unpleasantness which one would rather avoid. But it is a vitally important question for the press whether the High Court really has the jurisdiction and the powers which it has assumed in this case. If it has, the liberty of the press in the way of criticising the conduct of High Court judges is just so much as the judges, for the time being, are pleased to allow it and no more. A judge of the High Court thinks (rightly or wrongly), that something in a newspaper regarding himself is contempt. A rule is issued against the paper without warning. At two

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days' or if the judge pleases, at a single day's notice the accused has to appear. He is charged with contempt of court but there is no legal definition given of his offence, no law is specified as sanctioning the proceedings of the court; no precedents are cited. There is nothing but the opinion of the judges to decide whether he has written in contempt or not. The judges are at once plaintiffs, prosecutors and judges. Their own discretion is the sole guide as to the amount of the penalty. Now, granting that the article in the *Bengalee* is indefensible and that the editor deserved to be prosecuted and punished, is it not plain, nevertheless, that the power exercised by the court in this case is one which may be used in the destruction of the liberty of the press so far as criticism of our judges is concerned? If law and precedent really give this power to the court, it is surely a most dangerous power. If the court does not possess this power, is it wise on the part of the press to allow it to usurp it without protest? We have already pointed out that the jurisdiction of the court is at least open to serious question; that it has been denied by the ablest of our lawyers; that in the last preceding case of the kind (the only one that we remember) in which the *Englishman* was charged with contempt, the jurisdiction of the court was called in question, why should it be allowed without question when the accused happens to be a Bengalee editor? No matter how scurrilous or libellous the article may have been, the serious question is not what was the character of the article but what is the jurisdiction of the court. We do not ask that newspaper articles libelling or abusing judges should go unpunished; we do ask that offenders should be prosecuted and punished according to written law. Is that an unreasonable demand? We deny that any written law exists to justify the procedure against the *Bengalee*. If we are wrong we are willing to be convinced. Will anyone refer us to the law under which the High Court of Calcutta judged and sentenced Surendranath Bannerjee? If no such law exists—if the editor of the *Bengalee* has been punished without law, who knows whose turn will be next?"

An Englishman who shot dead two Indians in a Bengal

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village following a quarrel at a marriage party in 1901 was acquitted by the trial judge. Defending the murder, the *Englishman* wrote: "Although there will be a shriek from the native press, we cannot help thinking that possibly some such occurrence was necessary to teach the villagers a lesson which is too much lost sight of elsewhere, namely, that it is and ought to be dangerous to assault a European."

This insulting advertisement appeared in the *Englishman*: "Wanted: *sweepers*, *punkah coolies* and *bhistis* for the residents of Saidpur. None but educated Bengali babus who had passed the entrance examination need apply. Ex-deputy magistrates (Bengali) preferred."

The Anglo-Indian press played an important role in Bombay in 1889 in what is known as the Crawford corruption case. Crawford, a senior I.C.S. commissioner of the Central Division, had a shady reputation and was charged with extorting bribes from his subordinates. Successive governors of Bombay were hesitant to take action against him, but Governor Lord Reay decided to prosecute him. He rejected the verdict of the British judges who pronounced Crawford not guilty. In the course of the trial, confessions of *mamlatdars* (junior officials) were obtained on the understanding that they would not be used against them. When Crawford's guilt was proved, his friends launched a smear campaign not only against the *mamlatdars* but also against Lord Reay in which the Anglo-Indian papers joined. They said that the Indian officials who had been privy to the corrupt practices of Crawford should be dismissed. The *Times of India* which led the attack, while demanding the dismissal of the Indian officials, impugned the Indian character. G.K. Gokhale commented: "If you have Anglo-Indian misconduct to defend or natives or their sympathisers to abuse you, may rely on the *Times of India*. From the Crawford case the *Times of India* had drawn its own inference about the lack of integrity in educated Indians and their unfitness for higher responsibilities. It is not for these persons who are themselves living in glass houses to throw stones at us . . ."

When Indians were appointed to academic bodies, the

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Anglo-Indian papers protested as they encroached on the monopoly of European professors. Referring to this, R.P. Paranjpye said: "I have heard of grumblings in some Anglo-Indian newspapers about some of these appointments owing to their being natives but they are incomparably better than insulting us by appointing the average two-penny, half-penny Englishmen whose only qualification is their white skin . . ."

When the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, visited Madras in 1895 he was to have received an address from the Madras Mahajana Sabha, one of the oldest political institutions of the presidency. When an advance copy of the address was sent to him, as was the custom, the viceroy wanted three paragraphs in it relating to military expenditure and other important public issues to be deleted as he had decided not to accept addresses which raised controversial issues. The Sabha thereupon withdrew the address and decided not to present one. The *Madras Mail* was very angry with the Sabha and wrote: "The secretary of the shameless Sabha has sent us a copy of the correspondence between the Government of Madras and the Sabha relating to their precious address. And for what? Why 'for favour of publication' as the presumptuous prig would put it. Favour of publication, forsooth! Oh! disloyal curs of the Madras Mahajana Sabha! Favour you shall have none at our hands. If it be favour you want, go, seek it at the seditious hands of *The Hindu* and the firebrand *Standard*. You decline to present your address to the viceroy without the three obnoxious paragraphs, do you? It is like pygmies defying the giants. Does the disreputable Sabha opine that by this disloyal deed of theirs, the solar system would dissolve itself back into chaos? No! Let them rest assured that the world will not come to an end and that despite anything they may do, the celestial orbs will continue to spin and revolve round in their appointed courses. All that the Sabha has succeeded in doing is to cut its nose to spite its face."

In the early years of this century, the *C. and M. Gazette* of Lahore was involved in a controversy over the appointment of an Indian as principal of Stephen's College in Delhi. C.F. Andrews, great friend of Tagore and Gandhi, who one of those

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interested in the college, suggested the name of Prof. Rudra. This led to a spate of correspondence in the *Gazette*. One of the correspondents who signed himself "Fifty Years in India", spoke of the growing assertiveness of educated Indians and said: "I wish to lay special emphasis upon the words, 'subject race' for the native of India because educated Indians were the source of all trouble, they should not be permitted to hold government posts with a salary of more than Rs. 60 a month. "Replying to this, Andrews said education should not be the cause of unrest." It is not less education, but a thousandfold more that is needed," he wrote, "I am an Englishman in India who believes that my own King's pledged word to his people is a solemn promise and not a subtle fraud."

The *Pioneer* in 1888 had the reputation of being an organ of an influential section of officials who wanted to suppress the Indian National Congress formed three years earlier. The *Pioneer* campaigned for the suppression of the national organisation "in the interest of the safety of the Empire." It supported Sir Auckland Colvin, governor of the United Provinces when he brandished the "weapon of suppression over the heads of Congressman." It was stated that a man had only to make known that he belonged to the anti-Congress party "and his worldly success is sure to follow. He may write either to the *Pioneer* condemning the Congress, of course, giving his full name and address, as a ready means of recognition or he may get up an anti-Congress meeting, make a long speech there and next day send a garbled telegram to the *Pioneer*. It is ten to one that he will find his name in the next *Gazette* as a newly appointed *tahsildar* or an honorary deputy collector."

A well-known Indian editor, who in his early days served in an Anglo-Indian newspaper, has written that Anglo-Indian newspapers were much better produced than the Indian papers "which in the early days were difficult for a man of education to tolerate but for their purposeful, well-written editorials. They were well-organised, exercised an effective, uplifting influence on the standard of our editorial production. They provided a good training ground for Indian journalists. The

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editors of some of them were as good as any in the world. The news editors were men trained in England and knew their craft. These papers paid well. When the doors were flung open to Indians, there was a rush of applicants for places at the sub-editorial and reporting desks."

Communications and transport facilities had not fully developed then and newspapers had to be satisfied with publishing old news. In 1862, it took nine days for a letter to reach Calcutta from Bombay, Madras nine, Delhi six and Bangalore four. Mail from England came at an interval of five weeks. In 1870, the *Times of India* carried extracts from Calcutta newspapers that were nearly a week old, and from Madras newspapers that were much older. But the advent of the telegram made it possible to flash news from Calcutta in 13 minutes and from Madras in five minutes. However, sometimes under adverse weather conditions, telegrams were delayed and it was not unusual for them to be delivered from Calcutta to Bombay after a delay of 15 hours. The newspapers enjoyed postal concessions but the telegraph charges were heavy.

The opening of the Suez Canal, steam navigation and the cable brought the Englishmen exiled in India nearer home and in India the railways and the postal system knit the European community closer, which was strengthened with the arrival of European women in large numbers following settled conditions in the country. European society was organised on the pattern prevailing at home and this inevitably led to the widening of the gulf between the rulers and the subject race. Prestige, position and power began to dominate the thinking of the Englishman. This was much more evident in Calcutta than in Bombay where the tradition started by Robert Knight, of bringing the races closer, continued. The British press in Bombay provided a more complete picture of the Indian scene than the press in Calcutta.

There was little display of news during the period and the front page was taken up by government notifications and shipping intelligence was the only feature which appeared under a classified heading. It was not easy to fill up the pages for news was hard to get. It has been recorded that one editor,

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Mackenna of the *Gentleman Gazette* (Calcutta) was carried in a palanquin from office to office to gather news. Often he published news which he contradicted the next day. In Bombay, an "editors room" was opened in the Government Secretariat where reporters were given news of public importance and allowed to consult government records. At the Marine Department, the naval commander-in-chief provided a table and chairs for reporters in the waiting room and they were allowed to copy news from English newspapers when the mail arrived from home.

Reuter's news cables began to reach Bombay from 1865 and the first office of Reuter was set up in India in 1866. The cable cost one pound sterling a word with a minimum of 20 words per message. Commercial news was in greater demand than other types of news. Court cases and public meetings were well reported and newspapers lent the services of their reporters for official report of the proceedings of the Legislative Council. Sub-editors were not in a hurry to get the paper ready for the press and greater attention was paid to the literary content of what was published. The reporter did not rush with a garbled summary of an important after-dinner speech by a dignitary to be set up for the morning paper. The paper carried a note the next morning that the speech had been made and a full report would be published the next day. A 24-hour delay of an important speech or report of proceedings of the city Municipal Council made no difference to the editor or his customers. Proof-reading was very poor and one of the early editors of a Bombay paper wrote: "There was a nondescript mob of proof-readers of all conditions, the same as we see today, in the most elaborately equipped newspaper offices. The indifference of the average newspaper proprietor to the quality of the proof corrections is a puzzle of Indian journalism. The proof correctors are half educated men whose wages are so lean that they have to live on the smell of an oil rag and thus become the recognised tramps of the newspaper world."

Valentine Chiral has a grouse against the way speeches were reported in Indian newspapers. "Not only is the art of

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gallery reporting still in its infancy, but many Indian newspapers have still to learn that it is not 'cricket' to report only the speeches of their political friends and to omit or compress into a few lines the speeches of their adversaries . . . . The communication of speeches in advance to the press must be strenuously discountenanced."

On the eve of Lord Lytton assuming charge as viceroy in 1875, there was a clamour from officials for strong action against the language press (then called the vernacular press). It was accused of daily publishing mischievous falsehoods. Most of the attacks on the government were on subjects like racial discrimination, punishment of crime, and job opportunities, haughtiness of the Europeans and the "overbearing conduct" of British residents in native states. It was also alleged that the language press was publishing seditious material, in some cases even going as far as to encourage Indian soldiers to turn against their officers as they had done during the Mutiny.

Not all British officials, however, were in favour of restrictions on the language press. Sir Richard Temple, who was governor of Bengal, wrote to Lord Lytton that he had not found the Bengali press disloyal during his term of office. The Madras Governor, Duke of Buckingham, observed that the "offences complained of were statements of unpalatable truths in strong language." (Eventually when the Press Act of 1878 was passed, imposing restrictions on the language press, Madras Presidency was exempted from its operation). Lytton postponed action pending further consideration and meanwhile Robert Knight submitted a scheme for the establishment of a press bureau and improving press-government relations as a whole. He alleged that officials had controlled the supply of information to buy support and he deplored the practice of discouraging officials having any contact with the press.

In March 1877, a press commissioner was appointed and the first to hold the post was a journalist, Robert Lethbridge who was succeeded by C.E. Buckland. Both of them said that their job was to deal with the English press, whether owned by Europeans or Indians. The main object was to remove the "irritability" of the Anglo-Indian press. By degrees, Bengali

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journals also came under the purview of the commissioner. Lethbridge had this to say about the language press: "Editors had no means of ascertaining the views and wishes of the government, there being no such thing as Parliamentary debate or the right of interpolation in the council. Thus, with the best and most loyal motives, editors were entirely in the dark as to the course and significance of public policy and had to rely for this sort of information on the nearest gossip picked up in the offices of secretaries or in the drawing rooms of their wives." The exception, according to him was the *Pioneer* which had "with infinite pains and ability and at a very heavy cost, worked up a close connection with many of the secretaries through the social life of Simla and had for some time a monopoly of official information to be obtained in this way. Thus, the belief grew up with some truth in it that government was mostly responsible for the utterances of the *Pioneer* . . . . The arrangement also aroused the most violent jealousy on the part of the other great Indian newspapers."

Lytton promulgated the Vernacular Press Act in March, 1878. It imposed severe restrictions on the language press (the press laws are considered in greater detail in another chapter). Among the two newspapers frequently mentioned in the official minutes as offending organs were the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Halishahar Patrika*. It was said these journals needed dealing with but would gain considerable publicity and popularity if court proceedings were instituted against them. The *A.B. Patrika* got itself out of the clutches of the Act by converting itself into an English weekly overnight.

Introducing the bill in the Legislative Council, the legal member of the government said: "There is a large and increasing class of native newspapers which would seem to exist only for the sake of spreading seditious principles, of bringing the government and its European officers into contempt and of exciting antagonism between the governing race and the people of the country. This description of writing is not recent growth, but there has been a marked increase in it of late and especially during the last three or four years. During the past 12 months, it has been worse than ever, the writers gaining

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in boldness as they find that their writings are allowed to pass unpunished. Their principal topics are the injustice and tyranny of the British Government, its utter want of consideration towards its native subjects and the insolence and pride of Englishmen in India, both official and non-official. There is no crime however heinous and no meanness however vile which according to these writers is not habitually practised by their English rulers. Of late, a beginning has been made in the direction of inciting the people to upset the British Raj by denunciation, sometimes open and sometimes covert, of the alleged weakness and timidity of the English and their inability to maintain their present position in India."

The Press Act evoked widespread opposition among Indians and was criticised by Liberals in Britain. As a writer has remarked: "Since 1835, when Macaulay as legal member of the Viceroy's Council had released the Indian press from all censorship, Indians had come to regard a free press as a sacred right. In 1878, there were 200 language papers in as many languages. The press had been muzzled during the Mutiny but the restrictions then had been imposed equally on English and vernacular papers and had been withdrawn after the restoration of law and order". Another foreign observer wrote: "In the 18 years since the Crown had taken over the Government of India, two of its most cherished democratic institutions had been introduced into the country—education and a free press . . . . More and more newspapers were being started. There were papers in English with English editors, in English with Indian editors and dozens in Indian languages. In consequence, there had grown up for the first time an educated middle class whose voice could be heard in editorials and letters to the various newspapers and who had become sensitively aware of the racial discrimination practised against them by the British. They felt they were treated like the natives of Africa, quite unmindful of their glorious civilisations, great rulers, artistic heritage and ancient religious cultures. The growing number of young men with degrees from Indian universities could never hope to rise above the lowest rungs of their own country as tax collectors, magistrates and judges

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in lower courts dealing in cases involving only other Indians for no European would have tolerated a 'nigger' sitting in judgement over him. It was the same in the army; the higher ranks were reserved for the white man. As the *Friend of India* wrote: "If that fine soldier, Emperor Baber were a native we should make him a *subedar* in an infantry regiment and put over him a public school boy. If Emperor Akbar offered his services we should think he would be abundantly provided for with a writership in one of our offices."

The *Statesman* wrote on April 12, 1878: "The Government of Bengal seems determined not to allow the Vernacular Press Act long to remain a dead letter. We hear that already two papers published in Calcutta have received a communication from the commissioner of police who is believed to have acted on a hint from the Bengal Secretariat. One at least of the offending journals will, we are told, choose euthanasia rather than give a bond and security for good behaviour. Should the Act be really enforced, we look to our native contemporaries published in English to inform us fully and fairly of the extent of the misdemeanours of which the offending journals have been guilty. We hold most decidedly that really treasonable and injurious writing ought to be suppressed, but we desire to be assured in every case where this Act is enforced what the real character of the offence has been. The best check on official tyranny in this matter will be publicity. This the Act endeavours to avoid but our native contemporaries have it in their power to secure that no innocent paper shall be put down without a full exposure of the case."

Two years later, when a new Viceroy, Lord Ripon, had taken over, the *Statesman* hoped that he would see the wisdom of repealing the Act. It wrote: "The law is so framed that it cannot be put in motion against a newspaper without annihilating it. It is not a matter of imposing penalties for the penalties are simply destructive of the offending paper. If there is to continue to be a press law at all it must be made capable of punishing without annihilation. As to the objection that it sets aside the courts of law, this is the necessary evil inherent in an Act of the kind. It is, in fact, the very object

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of the existence of the Press Act, to set aside the law courts and to take this objection is simply to ask for the abolition of the Act."

The *Times of India* criticised the Calcutta correspondent of the *London Times* for his dispatch on the writings of the language press. It wrote on September 17, 1884: "The *Times* Calcutta correspondent has telegraphed home a choice selection of seditious and scurrilous excerpts from the native press. He should, however, have emphasised the fact that all these extracts are from second and third rate Bengalee newspapers and that in Bombay and Madras the tone of the native press is almost without exception entirely different. This is scarcely a 'sudden revival of sedition' as many of the English journals appear to think. Anyone, if it was worth his while, could in any given week make a similar collection. Papers of this kind have a clientele as ignorant as their editors. If they reflected the feelings expressed in the bazar they might possibly be useful as a test of public feeling. But we may take it that they reflect little more than the disappointments of a few half educated lads who find that without application their new learning is useless to them and who vie with one another in language outrageously silly. We may without scruple venture to assert that not one of the journals quoted by the correspondent of the *Times* has anything approaching a paying circulation. If he had carried his investigation a little further he would have found that these papers blacken the characters of nearly all the leading men of their own community to whom they are infinitely more noxious than to the Government officials. General abuse of the ruling power is the only spice with which they are flavoured. It is absurd to apply the term 'public opinion' to paltry sheets some of which are rarely supported by the public and it is a pity that the *Times* has given them a fictitious importance."

In a letter to Lord Salisbury, secretary of state for India, in 1877, a year before the enactment of the Vernacular Press Act, Lord Lytton wrote: "Politically speaking, the Indian peasantry is an inert mass. If it ever moves at all, it will move in obedience not to its British benefactors but to its native

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chiefs and princes, however tyrannical they may be. The only representatives of native opinion are the *baboos* whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native press and who really represent nothing but the social anomaly of their own position. To secure completely and efficiently utilise the Indian aristocracy is, I am convinced, the most important problem before us."

Lord Lytton did not lay much store on the sanctity of pledges and undertakings. In a confidential letter to a friend, quoted by Valentine Chirol, the viceroy said: "We all know that these claims and expectations (arising from the Queen's Proclamation) never can, or will be, fulfilled. We have to choose between prohibiting them and cheating them and we have chosen the least straightforward course. . . . Since I am writing confidentially I do not hesitate to say that both the Governments of England and of India appear to me, up to the present moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear."

Lord Lytton got into trouble with the press when he organised an Imperial Assembly in Delhi on January 1, 1877, and proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India. The Bombay press whipped up a campaign against the Assemblage, which was taken up by other Anglo-Indian newspapers in other parts of the country and also spread to the Indian press. The viceroy told the Queen that the press fulminated against the heartless expenditure on mere display while a portion of the population is starving. The newspapers were full of articles and caricatures representing the viceroy as "Nero fiddling while Rome burns."

Lytton, however, held the Assemblage successfully and commenting on it, the *Statesman* wrote: "We trust we have now seen the last of these ceremonials for a long time to come. The atmosphere of our relations both with the princes and people of India should be less artificial. The policy of pattings and praises is an anachronism with the land full of schools, colleges and universities and it is more than time that we abandoned finally this treating of the people as children. They

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long to be spoken to as men like ourselves and there is sickliness in the tinsel pageantry of all these proceedings that makes us long for the simplicity of a strong, just and manly word to the country in its place. The princes and people of India are not the children we persist in making them and we would have given all the Beaconsfield 'fireworks' with the medals and banners and salutes and embroidered arms fifty times over for a single strong and just word at the Assemblage. But it was not in Disraeli to speak it or to conceive it. Lord Lytton was deemed to try what 'fireworks' would do and no more unhappy destiny could well have been allotted to an able man."

In 1877 there was a great famine affecting vast areas of Bombay and Madras Presidencies and the native states of Hyderabad and Mysore and involving a population of 36 million. There were large stocks of grain available in Bengal, Burma and elsewhere but there was not adequate transport to carry them where they were needed. The Bombay and Madras Governments adopted different policies to meet the famine and the battles over the conflicting policies were fought out in the Bombay and Madras newspapers. The Bombay papers charged the Madras Government with inefficiency and "gross extravagance" while the Madras press accused the Bombay Government as well as the Government of India of heartlessness, of counting rupees as of more value than human lives. They maintained that the Governor, the Duke of Buckingham, was being very badly treated by the viceroy and his councillors, who knew nothing of conditions in Madras. Complaining that he had been denied funds by the Central Government, the duke had made a personal appeal to world charity.

Describing the famine conditions, the *Madras Times* and the *Madras Mail* wrote that the vast agricultural population was starving. "The farmers had sold or pawned everything they possessed to buy food; they had even torn the straw from the roofs of their houses to get a few coins for it. Women who would rather die than go to relief camps, sold their babies to other women who were then entitled to an extra ration in the camps as nursing mothers. Men were hiring out their

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wives and daughters as prostitutes. Only the vultures, wolves, jackals and wild dogs grew fat for people were dying every day in the streets. Cannibalism was so widespread that the police could not control it. There were instances reported of men killing their own children and eating them and drinking their blood. In the relief camps, the enemy was disease due to overcrowding. The camp hospitals overflowed although so many died that they had to be buried in communal graves." Lytton visited Madras and conferred with the Duke of Buckingham. The *Madras Times* reported that now the Viceroy had seen for himself what conditions were like in Madras and how well the duke was coping with them, he had gone away perfectly satisfied.

Lord Ripon, who succeeded Lord Lytton, as viceroy repealed the Vernacular Press Act in 1881. Its repeal was a foregone conclusion after a Liberal Government under Gladstone came to power in England. In the forefront of the agitation against the Act was Surendranath Bannerjee, who had bought a weekly *Bengalee* and carried on his campaign in it and on the platform. He formed a Native Association which sent a deputation to the viceroy. He addressed numerous meetings and mobilised public opinion against the Act. With the repeal of the Act, the post of press commissioner was abolished and the work of supervising the language press was delegated to the provincial Governments.

In a memorandum to the secretary of state in 1882, Lord Ripon said: "There are, of course, always two policies lying before the Government of India for its choice. The one is the policy of those who have established a free press, who have promoted education, who have admitted natives more and more largely to the public service in various forms and who have favoured the extension of self-Government; the other is that of those who hate the freedom of the press, who dread the progress of education and who watch with jealousy and alarm, everything which tends, in however a limited degree, to give the natives of India a larger share in the management of their own affairs. Between these two policies we must choose; the one means progress, the other means repression. Lord Lytton

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chose the latter. I have chosen the former and I am content to rest my vindication upon a comparison of the results."

When Lord Ripon became viceroy, the Anglo-Indian press was apprehensive and the Indian press expectant. And soon the occasion arose for the Anglo-Indian press to launch a tirade against the viceroy when the Ilbert Bill became the focus of a racial controversy. The bill, which was introduced in 1883, provided for trial of Europeans by Indian magistrates. The Europeans and their press thought this was an encroachment on their status and privileges and began an agitation against Ripon. He was insulted when he came to Calcutta from Simla and a conspiracy to kidnap him and ship him to England was uncovered.

At the height of the crisis, the *Englishman* wrote: "We are on the eve of a crisis which will try the power of the British Government in a way in which it has not been tried since the Mutiny of 1857." But this time there was a strong native press to retaliate against the Anglo-Indian press. A senior official warned the viceroy: "I am afraid that if the English press takes up the discussion of the proposed measure (Ilbert Bill), the native press will probably reply . . . which may not altogether be convenient." Day after day, the *Englishman* printed letters from angry correspondents, one of whom who signed himself "Britannicus" said in the opening paragraph: "The only people who have any right in India are the British; the so-called Indians have no right whatever." Much of the agitation was financed by European planters who were concerned about the diminution of their power and prestige. The head of the C.I.D. reported to the private secretary to the viceroy: "To make their grievance a general one, the Europeans raised the cry of danger to European women." In tune with this statement, the *Friend of India* exclaimed: "Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge, the magistrate being a copper coloured pagan?" Lord Ripon was forced to whittle down the provisions of the bill which provided for the trial of Europeans by Indian session judges and district magistrates with European juries. The English press in Calcutta hailed the amended bill as a victory for itself.

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6

TRUMPETS OF NATIONALISM

K. Rama Rao, one of India's great editors, has written: "Indian journalism owes its vitality, importance and influence to one great factor—its greatest journalists were men with a mission, men highly equipped intellectually, powerful writers, able controversialists and men of integrity and courage. We also owe grateful thanks to Bengal, home of Indian journalism, the inspiring ground of many battles, the powerhouse of many ideas and movements."

Two such journalists in Bengal in the latter half of the 19th century who revolutionised politics and were the torch-bearers of Indian nationalism were Surendranath Bannerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal. Ultimately they emerged as leading protagonists of the Moderate and Extremist groups in the Indian National Congress. Bannerjee began his career in the Indian Civil Service from which he was hounded out and which acted as the spark to launch him on his political mission and Pal came into journalism and politics from the classroom where he was a teacher for some time. Bannerjee was the founder and editor of the daily *Bengalee* which exercised great influence on nationalist opinion. Pal founded *New India* and *Vande Mataram* which were the vehicles for his fiery outpourings and revolutionary thought. Bannerjee led the agitation against the partition of Bengal and was called the "Uncrowned king of Bengal". Facile with his pen and powerful in his oratory, Pal was hailed as "one of the mightiest prophets of nationalism" by Aurobindo Ghose.

Surendranath Bannerjee was one of the earliest Indians to be admitted to the I.C.S. and he was dismissed in 1874 after three years' service for what the secretary of state for India described as a "palpable misuse of judicial powers" and for

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being guilty of falsehood. His real crime was that he had failed to correct a false report by his subordinate— an offence for which his English colleagues would have received no more than a departmental reprimand. A personal appeal to higher authorities in London proved of no avail and he was convinced that the "personal wrong to me was an illustration of the impotency of our people." Half of Hindu Bengal, he said, was shaken by the treatment meted out to him and the other half was too cowed down to express its resentment. He took a pledge to dedicate the rest of his life to "redressing our wrongs and protecting our rights."

According to Surendranath Bannerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal, the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was the immediate cause of the awakening of political consciousness and the genesis of the national movement on a country-wide scale. Pal has written that it was a time of awakening among students, which found expression in patriotic songs and plays, and in the press. Students' associations and societies began to grow, some of them functioning secretly, and their patriotic fervour was fuelled by the impassioned speeches of Bannerjee. In the words of one writer: "The protests against the Vernacular Press Act during the three years it was in force brought the Indians together in a way they had never been united before. The fight for Indian freedom by the educated masses can really be said to date from the Vernacular Press Act."

Pal said of Bannerjee that he was the guiding genius of all political organisations in India. He added that Bannerjee from the very onset "tried to correlate our patriotic sentiments to the history and achievements of all parts of India." K.M. Panikkar wrote: Surendranath Bannerjee was a great patriot and his amazing oratorical gifts and tireless energy in propagating the message of liberty helped greatly to create a sense of nationalism in the new classes. . . . He mirrored the ideas of the English educated men of his time and in his thought and speech identified the country with them."

Bannerjee was in the forefront of organising political activity not only in Bengal but all over the country. For this purpose he undertook an all-India tour which evoked good

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response. In Lahore, he persuaded Dayal Singh Majithia to start the *Tribune* (which is one of the Indian newspapers to have completed 100 years) and supplied it with machinery and also its first editor. The Indian owned and edited English press was very strong and influential in Calcutta with the *Bengalee*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindu Patriot* and *Indian Mirror* dominating the scene.

Bannerjee was the hero of the anti-partition movement when the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, partitioned Bengal for administrative convenience as he claimed, in the teeth of popular opposition. Bannerjee was a moderate who believed in evolution, not revolution. His was pre-eminently a restraining influence in Indian politics. "Not the restraint", as observed by a writer, "whose exercise involves a surrender of independent action or suggests a playing for government favour, but that which tempers idealism with sanity and which foresees the futility of irresponsible action. He would always warn his countrymen of the dangers implicit in 'playing with the fire' and in allowing their imagination to run away with itself. But he would never allow the counsels of restraint to degenerate into more reactionary influences or to serve as a wet blanket on the newly awakened enthusiasm of the young. His sound political instincts told him that new-born forces that make for freedom and progress cannot be suppressed but should be wisely harnessed to well-considered schemes of reform. His unique services consisted in his placing himself at the head of the agitation against the partition of Bengal and in favour of encouraging Indian industries which took the form of the *Swadeshi* movement."

In line with the political thinking of those days, Bannerjee was a loyal Indian who believed in the British connection. He once wrote in his paper: "We are the subjects of the proudest empire in the world. We glory in that imperial connection which makes us the participators of that noble heritage of freedom which is the birthright of every Englishman. Let the Russians come if they choose. They will find in the serried ranks of one of the grandest armies in the world, the countless

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millions of a loyal people, united by contentment, by gratitude, by willingness for self-sacrifice, ready to guard an empire that has meant in India the establishment of peace, the diffusion of knowledge and which I trust will yet mean the political enfranchisement of her vast people."

A caustic comment on his political philosophy was made by a writer in these words: "Being at times extreme in his moderation and at others moderate in his extremism he somehow missed that popularity that falls to unscrupulous firebrands or those that see visions of governmental patronage after a shortlived political activity." It has been recorded that Bannerjee's sense of public duty was so great that on the day when his wife had passed away and he was shaken by grief, he pulled himself up and dictated his usual leading article for his paper. English admirers of Bannerjee instinctively likened him to Burke and Gladstone for his mastery over style, his vigour of thought and the high moral platform which he always took.

When in 1891 Bannerjee led the Moderates' secession from the Congress, he declared: "We are the friends of evolution and the enemies of revolution. We abhor revolutions alike in our interests and those of the government. We deprecate all methods calculated to develop or strengthen the force of revolution.... The Moderate Party is the friend of stable and orderly progress, resolute in its denunciation of methods which in the name of liberty are calculated to weaken the foundation of social and political order;.... Our creed is cooperation with the government whenever practicable and opposition to its policy and measures when the supreme interests of the motherland require it. Our guiding principle is: 'cooperate when we can; criticise when we must."

Cast in a different mould altogether was Bipin Chandra Pal who was a born rebel. He was a product of the Brahmo Samaj movement in Bengal which campaigned for social and religious reform. In the words of a writer: "He was a child of the transitional period and he embodied in his own person the ideals of the past and the gropings towards the future. The movement for political freedom in Bengal was a sequel

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to the reformist urge initiated by the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. Their object was to eliminate the abuses that had crept into our society in the domain of religion and of social practices. The literary movement was practically simultaneous and owed its inception to Bankim Chandra Chatterji."

In his book, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Pal had said that Bengal was specially affected by the spirit of nationalism and individualism which marked the 19th century in Europe. And it was this which explained the fact that Bengal led the freedom movement. The earliest effective political organisation in Calcutta owed its impetus to many leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. Pal came into prominence first as a persuasive speaker at meetings of the Brahmo Samaj. Later, he turned to active politics and journalism. Valentine Chirol described him as "a high caste Hindu and a man of great intellectual force and high character". He wrote: "He has not only received a western education but has travelled a great deal in Europe and in America and is almost as much at home in London as in Calcutta." Lord Ronaldshay had said of him: "His pen played a not inconsiderable part in the social and political ferment that has stirred the waters of Indian life."

Pal started life as a teacher and worked in many places including Bangalore. From a teacher he became a journalist. He started a Bengali weekly *Paridarsak* in Sylhet in 1880. In 1883 he joined the *Bengal Public Opinion* in Calcutta as its chief editorial writer. Its editor was Babu Bhubon Mohan Das, father of Chittaranjan Das, the latter day Congress leader of Bengal. It was here that Pal had his regular training in journalism. In 1887 he went to Lahore to join the Tribune as a sub-editor and he was for some time the Calcutta correspondent of the *Hindu* of Madras. He later founded the English weekly *New India* and another weekly, *Bande Mataram* which passed on to the hands of Aurobindo Ghose. He went on a lecture tour in the U.S.A. in 1899 and before that he was in Oxford at the New Manchester College.

Pal's active political career might be said to have begun with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He

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was a delegate to the Congress session in Calcutta in 1886, from his own district of Sylhet. He was then 26. Among the politicians in the first decade of the 20th century he was universally regarded as the father of revolutionary thought. He had the consummate ability of expressing the most advanced extreme views in language which was not susceptible to legal action. The advocate-general of Madras when asked why Pal was not being prosecuted for his extremist views and speeches, said Pal's speeches although highly inflammable were not seditious. It was said that however incompatible with the maintenance of British rule were the propositions set forth by him, they contained no incitement to violence and no personal attacks. He once wrote in *Bande Mataram*: "The time has come when in the interests of truth and civic advancement and the freedom of the people, our British friends should be distinctly told that while we are thankful for all the kind things they have done for us already, the sacrifices they have made to make our lot easy and our yoke light, we cannot any longer suffer ourselves to be guided by them in our attempts at political progress and emancipation. Their point of view is not ours. They desire to make the Government of India popular without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British; we desire to make it autonomous and absolutely free of British control."

An English critic paid this tribute to Pal: "He had the capacity to express extreme views in polite and civil language." V.S. Srinivasa Sastri said of his oratory: "Oratory had never dreamt of such triumphs in India. The power of the spoken word had never been demonstrated on such a scale." Sastri said his speeches were packed with facts and at the same time suffused with emotion, with indignation and hope. His political propaganda was uncompromising and full of fire. With Aurobindo Ghose he has been claimed as among the first apostles of the nationalist movement which demanded freedom from British rule. He regarded the nationalist movement as essentially spiritual. "To regard it as merely economic or political is to misunderstand it altogether", he said. It was this doctrine that he preached day in and day out in the

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columns of his two English weeklies, *New India* and *Bande Mataram*. Inevitably, he came into conflict with the British authorities. In 1907, he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for refusing to testify against Aurobindo Ghose in a sedition case.

Political activity in the 1870s and 1880s, Pal once wrote, could hardly be called bitter or even vigorous. "Politics in those days did not involve any suffering or sacrifice. The rulers did not take our infant political movement seriously. They saw no menace to their authority in it. The whole thing was more or less a partime though certainly the more serious-minded of our youthful intellectuals did not consciously pursue it as such," Pal said: "The older generations drew their inspirations of freedom and progress from Europeans and, especially, British history and literature. The old patriotism did not feed upon the actualities of Indian thought and life but upon the idealities of Europe and America. Freedom, except in the movements of religious and social revolt where it meant only personal freedom, was a vague idea. The conception of freedom has its natural growth in the sense of bondage and its inevitability is determined by the strength of this sense. There was a keen and growing sense of social and sacerdotal restrictions in the English educated classes who were inspired with the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity imbibed from the gospel of the French Revolution through its English presentations; and consequently, there was a desire for freedom from the restrictions of caste and custom. But there was hardly any deep and real sense of political bondage in the country then. There was scarcely any sense of political wrongs. On the contrary, there was a general impression that the British have established peace where there was turmoil and a settled Government where there was anarchy. Nor was there yet any perception of the ruinous economic conflict between Great Britain and India. Consequently, the desire for political freedom was very weak and it did not go beyond getting higher appointments in the administration and some share in the shaping of the laws of the land. The old patriotism, therefore, simply represented an awakening of

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the educated classes to a consciousness of their inferior position in the modern world and a revival of the memories of the past glories of their race. The political ideas of the Extremists were based on entirely different assumptions. There is another attitude. That with the decadence of our faith in the foreign government we have learned to look nearer home. Our eyes have been turned away from Government House, away from the Houses of Parliament, from Simla and Calcutta and our faces have now turned to the starving, the naked, the patient and long suffering 300 millions of our people and in it we see a new potency, because we view them with an eye of love which we had never felt before and in the teeming, toiling, starving and naked population of India we find possibilities, potentialities, germs that have given rise to this new movement. That is the cornerstone of this movement, namely, faith in the people, faith in the genius of this nation through ages by historic evolution, faith in the eternal destiny of the Indian people. With the decadence of our faith in the foreign government and in the foreign nation has grown up this higher, this dearer, this deeper, this more vital and more divine faith in Indian humanity."

Pal was against piecemeal political reform which he thought might be nothing more than a "lubrication of the wheels of the bureaucratic machinery". Our programme is that we shall so work in the country, so combine the resources of the people, so organise the forces of the nation, so develop the instincts of freedom in the community that by this means we shall—shall in the imperative—compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us." The weapons he advocated for achievement of freedom were to go *Swadeshi* and boycott foreign goods, passive resistance and boycott of Government service. "It seems to me", he said "that by means of the boycott we shall be able to do the negative work that will have to be done for the attainment of *Swaraj*. But positive work also will have to be done. Without positive training, no self-government will come to the boycotter. It will come through the organisation of our village life, of our *taluqs* and districts."

With Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak and Lajpat Rai, Pal

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formed a powerful extremist group in the Congress which was to dominate the political scene until the advent of Mahatma Gandhi and the launching of the non-cooperation movement. Pal could not subscribe to Gandhi's policy and methods and had to resign from Pandit Motilal Nehru's paper, *Independent* of which he had been editor, in 1921. From then on he faded from Indian politics and journalism, and his political views were no longer as extreme as they once were. Gokhale had summed up his impressions of Pal in a letter to a friend. He wrote : "Mr. Pal has never worked for the Congress in the past. He is a very unscrupulous man and inordinately ambitious. Being a very powerful speaker, he does not see why he should not have the same influence in the country as Mr. Surendranath (Bannerjee) and he is determined to play the role of a leader at all costs. He uses brave words but behind these words there is neither courage nor character and, of course, there is no judgement and I have little doubt that in a year or two we shall see this man's collapse, whatever noise he may succeed in making temporarily."

Pal Lovett has written : "The real development of the art and business of journalism as it is understood in the West dates in India from the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 . . . The influence of the press on the administration of the country and the political education of the intelligentsia made itself felt with every increasing force from the epochal event . . . . The papers which were native and racy, of the soil, gained a new importance whereas those owned and edited by Englishmen which voiced the views of the British Raj and British planters were compelled to pursue a new orientation." The birth of the Congress heralded a renaissance in which the press fully participated.

The earliest political organisation formed in Bengal was the Zamindars Association of Bengal in 1837 whose object was to promote the interests of the landholders. In 1843, George Thompson, a prominent member of the British India Society of London, started the Bengal-British Society which was composed mainly of aristocratic Indians and Europeans. It, however, failed in its object of rousing political consciousness even

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in the limited circle of educated men in Bengal. The Zamindars Association and the Bengal-British India Society were amalgamated in 1851 and renamed the British Indian Association. Its secretary was Kristodas Pal, editor of the *Hindu Patriot*. There was another Association, the India League run by the Ghosh brothers of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and a third, the Indian Association which was formed in 1876 and the moving spirit of which was Surendranath Bannerjee.

While the first two associations were not effective, the third under the inspiring leadership of Bannerjee forged ahead and contacted similar associations in Bombay and Madras to establish an all-India political organisation. The Bombay Association was formed in 1852 with Dadabhai Naoroji taking the lead. In Madras, the Native Association was formed in the early 1850s and it was active in issuing protests against various administrative policies of the rulers. The objects of the Indian National Congress to be formed in Bombay in 1885 were indicated by the Indian National Union (of which the moving spirit was Surendranath Bannerjee) in March, 1885, as : "The direct objects of the conference will be (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other ; to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year. Indirectly, this conference will form the germ of a native Parliament and if properly conducted will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form or representative institutions." Of the 72 delegates who attended the first Congress session, a third were journalists. Among them were editors of leading Indian newspapers like G. Subramania Aiyer of *The Hindu* of Madras, Motilal Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta and Narendranath Sen of the *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta.

The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, had given his blessings to the Congress. In a letter to David Hume, one of the founders of the Congress, he said : "We found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people and it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organisation through which the Government might be informed regarding the best Indian public opinion."

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K.M. Panikkar, who was a great journalist, has analysed the limitations and the environment in which the early nationalist leader, who founded the Congress, worked. "They were fervently patriotic", he wrote, "anxious to see India advance politically and socially and they worked steadily for that purpose. They were moved by great ideals and held firmly to the doctrines of liberalism. But they were aliens in India, strangers to their own people, and their ideas and beliefs were not shared by any but a small clan of educated people.

Another writer has noted : "Two hundred years of common history and intimate contact had made England enter into the very bone and marrow of India. It would be no exaggeration to any that Indian nationalists were more Anglo-Indian than Indian. However much they might have denounced the British Raj and even attempted to fly away from British civilisation they could not hide the fact that they were the products of that very Raj and civilisation." In line with this view was the political philosophy of Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the architects of the Congress. He wrote in his journal that India's wrong should not blind her to the benefits of British rule. The permanence of that rule was the starting point and foundation of all hopes. "India's destiny had been linked with it and she has no desire to change the yoke for any other."

The problem before the pioneers of the national movement which was not strong enough to try confrontation with British authority, was to adopt ways and means, which may appear to us today to be too gradual, to make the British realise that they could not run their administration without the support of the Indian intelligentsia. According to one historian of the Congress the early leaders of the Indian national movement were trying to do two things simultaneously; on the one hand they wanted their Indian followers to take the necessary steps to modernise their society and economy and, on the other, they wanted the rest of the world to acknowledge India as equals to any group of people. They realised that the success of the first would facilitate their second task.

The specific political demands which the early leaders of the Congress placed before the government and their attempts

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to educate the Indian Public on the basis of these demands were in line with their general approach. Broadly speaking, their demands were the extension of the civil and political rights of the people, increasing the number of Indians in the administrative services, the strengthening of Parliamentary democracy by the expansion of legislative councils and the protection of Indian industries. Freedom of the press was an important plank in the programme of the early Congress. Many Indian leaders resisted in the latter half of the 19th century, the government's attempts to muzzle the press. In 1879, a public meeting was held in Calcutta to protest against the Vernacular Press Act. Speaking in the Imperial Legislative Council, Gokhale said : "The vigilance of the press is the only check that operates from outside, feebly, it is true, but continuously, upon the conduct of the Government which is subject to no popular control. . . . The press is in one sense, like the Government, a custodian of public interests and any attempt to hamper its freedom by repressive legislation is bound to affect their interests prejudiciously and cannot fail in the end to react upon the position of the Government itself."

Long before the Congress was founded and long before it voiced the demand for *Swaraj*, the Indian press had espoused the cause of self-government for India. In 1870, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* demanded the constitution of a Parliament for India and in 1874, Kristodas Pal wrote in the *Hindu Patriot* : "Our attention should be directed to Home Rule for India, to the introduction of Constitutional Government in India . . . If Canada could have a parliament, if such small and little advanced colonies as Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New South Wales and New Zealand could have elected councils surely British India has a fair claim to similar representation. . . . Home Rule for India ought to be our cry and it ought to be based upon the same constitutional basis that it recognised in the colonies."

From the beginning, the Anglo-Indian press, with the exception of the *Statesman*, showed no sympathy, active or passive, to the Congress; they were openly suspicious and distrustful of it. The *Pioneer* led the attack on the Congress and

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its cry was taken up by the other Anglo-Indian papers which denounced the Congress and its methods and said they resembled the Irish freedom movement and savoured of a seditious organisation "devoid of representative character and substance." When Dadabhai Naoroji presiding over the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 proclaimed for the first time the demand for *Swaraj*, the Anglo-Indian papers did not like it. This unequivocal demand, they thought, introduced into the political arena a new element which spelt "disaster" for the European community. Naoroji's presidential address was condemned as surrendered to the extremists. The *Englishman* complained that Naoroji who had been invited by the Moderates to quench the flames of hatred against British rule in India had used "kerosene for the purpose." ,The *C. and M. Gazette* wrote that "he had gone over to the Extremists" Echoing their feeling was the *Times of London* which wrote : "We have won India by the sword and it is well for the small and highly educated classes which are alone represented in the Congress that the British sword stands between them and their native enemies. That is the fundamental fact in the whole situation which makes all claims for full self-government in India absurd."

Alone among its tribe, the *Statesman* had some good words to say about the Congress. It wrote in 1887 : "The moderation which the leaders of the National Congress movement have shown throughout the proceedings from the beginning is having its just influence upon the public mind. The movement is winning for itself the sympathy and confidence of the English community . . . . The speaker or writer who, under these circumstances, would intentionally say one word to alienate English sympathies from the just and moderate aims of the gentlemen who are leading the movement is no friend either to his own country or to the people of India."

In September, 1905, Lord Curzon, the viceroy, announced the partition of Bengal in the teeth of popular opposition and paved the way for a country-wide agitation which might be said to be the beginning of the freedom movement which

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achieved its goal 42 years later. *The Hindu's* Calcutta correspondent reporting the partition wrote : "The proclamation declaring the dismemberment of our country, the division of our race and separation of kinship between Eastern and Western Bengalees was issued on September 1. The first of September will be a memorable day in Bengal, woefully memorable for tragedy enacted and the national calamity that befell us on that day. With the partition accomplished, Bengal enters into a new phase of life, a period of unrest and agitation which will most likely not end soon. Will Bengal ever be united ? There are grave doubts about that. My impression is that England having grown imperialistic and shown signs of gradually developing her coercive attitude to India, there is no hope for the recovery of the rights, privileges and possessions of which we have already been deprived. The divided Bengal can hardly ever be expected to be reunited. And this means that Bengalees will now be converted into and even remain, an anti-British community."

The correspondent reported that hundreds of meetings had been held in the interior of the province protesting against the partition at which pledges were taken to boycott British goods. "The enthusiasm awakened among the people in regard to the partition agitation is as deep as it is intense and real", he said. "In many places, members of the audience at the meeting have destroyed British-made articles which they happened to have at the moment on their persons, such as shoes, shirts, watches, etc. In other meetings audiences have made a bonfire of all the foreign articles they had in their possession."

The Anglo-Indian press, which usually was the champion of Government policies, parted ways with Curzon on the issue of partition. They criticised what they called his "extravagant measures" which in the name of efficiency aimed at a complete revision, if not a revolution, of the entire system of British rule in India. The *Statesman*, which described the partition as "the crowning folly of Lord Curzon's regime", said : "There never was a time in the history of British India when public feeling and public opinion were so little regarded by the supreme Government as they are by the present administration. In this

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matter of partition of Bengal, the force of public opinion has been remarkable. It could not be indeed otherwise, for in spite of their parade of consulting the legitimate interests' of the districts involved in the proposed separation, the government is well aware that its scheme is a direct attack upon solidarity and the growing political strength of the Bengali race ...The government may or may not choose to give weight to the outburst of feeling on the subject of partition, but it will necessarily recognise the new note of practicability which the present situation has brought into the political agitation and it will sooner or later realise that just as religions thrive on persecution so there is nothing half so effective as the systematic disregard of public opinion for fostering political discontent."

The Englishman had this to say: "The change . . . has been determined upon in the teeth of a practically unanimous public opinion. There is no reason to suppose that this public opinion will become silent or non-existent as soon as the partition is carried into effect. The situation, therefore, will be this: an administrative *coup d'etat* without precedent will have been carried out. The people who will have to live under its results will be dissatisfied and uneasy. Now, all governments, even the most despotic, are obliged to rule in the long run in accordance with the wishes of the governed or at least to refrain from governing in direct opposition to these wishes. The difficulties of the governor of the new province under the peculiar circumstances of its emergence would, one fears, be extreme if not insuperable."

The Englishman conceded the success of the movement for boycott of British and foreign goods. It wrote: "It is absolutely true that Calcutta warehouses are full of fabrics that cannot be sold. In the earlier days of the boycott it was the fashion to assert that depression in the piecegoods trade was due to this or other economic cause. Many prominent Marwari firms have been absolutely ruined and a number of the biggest European import houses have had either to close down their piecegoods branch or to put up with very small business where previously they had a large one. As for stock in warehouses, they tend to

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grow large as Marwari and Indian buyers who had given forward orders now state that they cannot afford to take delivery. These facts are now so well-known that it is idle to attempt to hide them. Indeed, the time has come when all injuries inflicted on trade by boycott should be made fully known. There is no question of encouraging the boycotters as they need no encouragement. But there is the question of thoroughly awakening the public at home and the Government of India to the fact that in the boycott the enemies of the Raj have found a most effective weapon for injuring British interests in the country. . . . Boycott must not be acquiesced in or it will more surely ruin the British connection with India than an armed revolution."

Gokhale who called the partition as a "cruel wrong inflicted on our Bengal brethren" in his presidential address at the Banares Congress session in 1905, provoked criticism from the *Times of India*. Gokhale went on to say it was a "complete illustration of the worst features of bureaucratic rule in India, its utter contempt for public opinion its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people . . . and its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed." Gokhale supported the *Swadeshi* movement and the call for boycott of British goods as a political weapon. The *Times of India*, whose editor was F.J. Bennett, said that Gokhale had ceased to be a "steadying force" on public feeling. "The Mr. Gokhale who presided over the Banares Congress will seem to many readers of his inaugural address to be a different PERSON FROM THE Gokhale whom they knew some years ago as a sober and dispassionate critic of the act and policies of the Government. . . . Gokhale had fallen into the wild ways of the perfervid orators and writers of the Deccan who in the days when he was much more restrained in utterance than he is now, seemed to move him to remonstrance."

In the language press of Calcutta, three papers which came on the scene after the partition as champions of revolution were the *Sandhya*, the *Nagasakhti* and the *Yugantar*. The *Yugantar*, founded in 1906 by Barendra Kumar Ghose, a brother

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of Aurobindo, achieved great popularity. It claimed its mission was to preach revolution as a religion even more than a political movement. It wrote: "At the present time, righteousness is declining and unrighteousness is springing up in India. A handful of alien robbers is ruining the crores of people of India by robbing the wealth of India. Through the hard grinding of their servitude, the ribs of countless people are being broken to pieces. Endless endeavours are being made in order that this great nation by losing, as an inevitable result of this subjection its moral, intellectual and physical power, its wealth, its self-reliance and all other qualities, may be turned into the condition of the beasts of burden or be wholly extinguished. Why, Indians, are you losing heart at the sight of many obstacles in your path, to make a stand against this unrighteousness ? Fear not, Oh ! Indians, God will not remain inactive at the sight of such unrighteousness in his kingdom. He will keep his word. Placing firm reliance on the promise of God, invoke his presence and he will descend in your midst to destroy unrighteousness. Do not be afraid. With the lightning of heaven flashing in their hearts men perform impossible deeds."

The paper ended with a lyrical vision of the Indian of the future with the "independent flag of righteousness," unfurled, her virtues restored, plague and famine banished, her industries brought to the highest pitch of scientific development, her armies and fleets going forth to use the unlimited strength, knowledge, and righteousness of India for the benefit of the whole world."

Commenting on the state of the press during this period, Valentine Chirol said that the classes whose confidence in the British Raj was still unshaken were "practically unrepresented in the press which is mostly in the hands of the intellectuals of whom the majority are drifting into increasing estrangement, while the minority is generally too timid to try to stem the flowing tide. Nor, if the Moderates in Bengal were overawed by the violence of the new creed, can the whole blame be laid upon their shoulders when one remembers how little was being done by the government and how ineffective that little was to check this incendiarism. Though there were

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many press prosecutions and action was taken repeatedly against the *Yugantar* in respect of particular articles, the limited powers possessed by the government were totally inadequate and it was not till the Indian Newspapers (incitement to offences) Act was passed in June, 1908, that the *Yugantar* was suppressed. In the meantime, it had left an indelible mark on Indian history and many innocent victims paid with their lives. . . ."

At the opening of the 20th century, a new generation and a new temper vastly different from that of its founders had possessed the Congress. The number of delegates who attended its annual sessions had swelled and they came from all parts of the country. It had not yet been captured by the extremists who wanted to see the end of every vestige of British connection and the majority still professed to follow the methods of Western democracy and desired the application of Western principles of Government in India and they conducted their proceedings in English. Dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Congress and its lack of achievements found expression in the younger generation who began to ask the question : "What has the Congress achieved ?" As was remarked by a writer: "The inherent weakness of the Moderate party was that it had little tangibility to show for its pains. More than a year had passed since the Liberal Government assumed office but the partition of Bengal remained and the issue of constitutional reform practically unopened. This unconscionable delay was undermining the credibility of Moderate leadership and reinforcing the case of their opponents."

The Congress was concerned with "reforms", not freedom, and it placed special emphasis on the spread of education, the wider employment of Indians in government service, and the separation of the judiciary from the executive. Its members were Anglophiles and loyal and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta defined their political philosophy: "I accept British rule as a dispensation so wonderful, a little island set at one end of the world establishing itself in a far continent as different as it could be that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will."

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The critics were led by Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal who asked what the Congress had achieved by 20 years of constitutional agitation. Aurobindo Ghose charged Congress leaders with lack of vision, courage, earnestness and said the Congress with its "suppliant ways" was an utter failure. He launched his attack in a series of articles, titled. "New lamps for old" in the *Induprakash*. Had the British bureaucracy mistaken the restraint of the Congress for cowardice ? he asked. Had not the excellently worded resolutions of the Congress found their way into the official waste paper basket ? Aurobindo thought that the ideal of colonial self-government for India was a political monstrosity and a negation of Indian patriotism. He wanted unqualified *Swaraj*. He took over the *Bande Mataram* and his eloquent English press turned it "into a heady wine" for the new group which was questioning not only the right of the British Government to rule India but also the right of the veteran leaders of the Congress to speak for the Indian people. Aurobindo's political activities not only synchronised with the rising tide of the agitation against partition but also with the emergence of a new philosophy of life based on the teachings of the *Gita*, whic hemphasised the supremacy of action over passivity.

"In point of intellectual ability, powers of organisation and leadership and religious earnestness, Aurobindo Ghose stands in solitary splendour in political India", wrote an admirer. "His simplicity, his excessive puritanism, his love of contemplation and his charming manners enhanced tenfold the hypnotic hold that he had on his followers and admirers."

A new generation was growing up which refused to take British tutelage or good faith for granted, wrote the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*. The Congress seemed to be repeating the same demands year after year and doubts had begun to surface about the wisdom of its strategy, it said. The critics wondered, it added, if there was any point in petitioning "from the *chota sahib* to the *burrah sahib*". The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, himself was bitterly opposed to the Congress and he did not think it would last long. In a letter to the secretary of state in 1900 he wrote : "My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its

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fall and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise. My belief is that the best men in the Congress are more and more seeing the helplessness of their cause and indeed many of their papers have begun to argue that they had better trust me to give them as much as I can instead of wasting their energies in clamouring for what no viceroy is likely to give them at all."

He had contempt for the Bengali press which was agitating for his recall. "All my policy and my acts tend to rivet British rule more firmly on to India and to postpone the longed for day of emancipation. I am an imperialist and imperialism is fatal to all their hopes. I hold the scales with exasperatingly even hand but this is the last thing that they desire.... I have had a period of peace and this deprives them of their most fertile source of grumbling. One by one I am laying down lines of policy upon all the vexed questions of the day... these lines are not their... for they do not wish for settlement or solution. They prefer the open sore which can always be kept angry by a twist of the goad."

Curzon said the Bengali press wanted his departure because further reform and redress of grievances would weaken their case. India had a free and flourishing press, he said. For how long would that be compatible with paternal Government by foreigners, he asked. And what weight should be given to newspapers which but a small section of the people could read or to agitation representing a minute minority? He told Sir William Wedderburn, a Congress sympathiser: "A minority ruling a vast majority ought, so far as is consistent with principle and duty, to endeavour to get public opinion on its side. This I aspire to do. But I have never thought myself that there was any special necessity in India for focusing so necessarily composite a public opinion or for trying to make it speak through a single megaphone. The noise comes forth as the voice of India. But if you go to the other end of the funnel you find it is nothing of the sort." He did not believe that Indians desired any alternative to foreign rule and he conceived his mission to be one of "perpetually building bridges over that racial chasm that yawns

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eternally in our midst and which, if it becomes wider and there are no means of getting across it, will one day split the Empire asunder."

It was while trying to build bridges over the racial chasm that Curzon fell foul of the Anglo-Indian press which opposed him tooth and nail in his efforts to secure justice for the Indian as against the European. He believed that miscarriages of justice which were widespread in India were not only incompatible with the true character of British rule but also, if unchecked, was a serious danger to the administration. His predecessors had failed to tackle the problem and it had become much more difficult for him now. He realised he would not get the help of Englishmen in India "who are banded together in a conspiracy to gloss over whatever an Englishman does and I have no doubt that they bitterly resent my attitude. But I see very clearly that we can continue to hold this country only by fairness and justice and if I am given sufficient health, I vow that when I leave, I will without having abated one jet of our necessary authority or prestige, have placed the relations between the two races on a better basis."

Curzon was concerned that in 1903 there had been a rash discrimination of cases "which make my blood boil. But they pass without a murmur from the English press and with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders from 19 out of 20 Europeans in the country." The viceroy thought that if the Indian press printed with their comments the cases of assaults on Indians by Europeans, the British position would become untenable within a few years. The racial prejudice seemed to be strongest among planters, merchants and businessmen. The British-owned press did not support Curzon in his campaign against the "sheeting incidents". On the other hand, the *Pioneer* published everyday anonymous letters which argued that the Whites were invariably provoked by the insolence of the Indians. The *Englishman* followed suit. Magistrates, district judges, juries and courts martial all failed when it came to sentencing a European for causing injuries to an Indian. Even the High Court in Calcutta was no exception. The Secretary of State, Lord Hamilton, shared Curzon's view that

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even the most fairminded among the European community were not keen to bring their compatriots to justice. He feared that too many young Englishmen used their hands and feet in dealing with Indians, not from malice or sadism but because it was the fashion. "It is our business to break the fashion", he said. Queen Victoria wrote to Curzon : "We shall never be really liked in India if we keep up this racial feeling and some day real danger may result from it."

Curzon was embarrassed when the Home Government credited him with influence over the press in India and wanted him to create public opinion in favour of sending Indian labourers to the Transvaal in South Africa. Curzon had vigorously resisted the proposal to send 20,000 Indians to the South African settlement to build railways. Curzon told Secretary of State, Broderick: "The name of South Africa stinks in the nostrils of India. The most bitter feeling exists ever the treatment meted out to Indians in the Transvaal and Natal. Any attempt to ignore or override this feeling would produce a commotion greater even than that over the South African garrison, while the recollection of the latter would tend to inflame it. We are not in the least anxious to send Indian coolies to work on railways in the Transvaal or anywhere else."

Broderick would not take a no from Curzon and he believed that Curzon led or inspired the Indian press, "presumably in its attitude to the various issues on which the viceroy and the British Cabinet had differed." Curzon's secretary, Walter Lawrence told the secretary of state that Curzon stayed aloof from the press. Though a hint or a nod would raise a storm in cases where England overruled India, it was never given. Curzon himself described it as an "absurd fable". "If anyone started the story that you were secretly a Mormen and had six ladies strewn about at different watering places in Wales, you would probably burst out laughing, not swearing... suffice it to say that in five years I have not had a single conversation with a single Indian pressman, that during that time I have not written, inspired or suggested a single communication in the press (other than official communiques officially used); that

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my attitude to the Indian press . . . has bought me many enemies ; and that I will take my hat off to any public man at home who can show a similar record."

The increasingly violent attacks on Curzon by the Indian press began to worry the Home Government and the feeling gained ground that a strong viceroy with imperialist tendencies no longer suited Indian conditions. Curzon was told that whatever success he achieved as an administrator would mean nothing if he remained inflexible on questions affecting the foundation of British rule in India and the Indian press was bound to clamour for a more pliable successor. "The Englishman they want as viceroy", the secretary of state wrote to him, "is a sentimental radical who is full of wishy-washy ideas as to the equalisation and fraternisation of all races and who would act upon that idea in India."

When Curzon was away in London on leave, the acting Viceroy, Lord Ampthill wrote to the secretary of state : "The native press and a section of the English press continue to abuse Lord Curzon in a monstrously unfair and spiteful manner, and there are now hardly any of these newspapers which do not express a hope that he will not return to India. They thank him in a perfunctory manner for having got the salt tax reduced and for having maintained an impartial attitude in the matter of collisions between Europeans and natives but when this is done they consider themselves at liberty to assail him with the pettiest sarcasm and vilest abuse."

At the height of the anti-partition agitation, the owner of a well-known Indian Newspaper approached Curzon's secretary, Walter Lawrence, and said : "We do not ask for Home Rule now, nor in 10 years, nor in 20, but all we ask is that he (Curzon) will not shut the door of hope on us. Ask him to say that perhaps in 50 years India may be self-governing." When Curzon was informed of this request, he thought long before he said : "No, I will say nothing for it might embarrass my successor if I raised any hopes or expressed my opinion as to when self-government will come." When his secretary remarked that it must come some day, Curzon said : "It will

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not come in my time and I cannot say what may happen in the future." "We are ordained to walk here in the same track for many a long day to come," he added, "They cannot do without us and we should be impotent without them." "If ever there was any viceroy in India who was most unpopular and sowed and broadcast the seeds of discontent among the people, it was Lord Curzon and yet Mr. Morley went out of his way and lauded him to the skies," the *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta wrote in 1906.

Curzon got into trouble with the Home Government in the wake of his quarrel with Lord Kitchner, commander-in-chief, over the question of abolition of the post of military member of the Viceroy's Council. The Home Government took the side of Kitchner and Secretary of State Broderick charged Curzon with leaking out secret documents to the Indian press in order to whip up a campaign against the Government in London. A report in the London paper said that a series of articles in the *Times of India* on the controversy was inspired by Curzon. Curzon denied the charge but Broderick believed it and told the Cabinet that Curzon despite his denial had "assiduously dictated material for the Indian newspapers which were supplied from day to day with the subject matter of confidential telegrams." The prime minister himself cabled Curzon to keep communications secret. Curzon denied he had inspired the *Times of India* articles. Lovat Fraser, editor of the *Times of India*, denied that he had had a private conversation with Curzon or received any information from him or his staff, and said that Curzon did not ask for his support.

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7

"LION OF MAHARASHTRA"

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by fierce repression by the alien rulers and persecution of the Indian press, especially the language press, in the wake of the anti-partition agitation and the *Swadeshi* movement which spread to all parts of the country. The centre of activity shifted to Maharashtra where a new revolutionary leader was born. His countrymen called him "Lion of Maharashtra" but the rulers in the words of Valentine Chirol, viewed him as the "father of Indian unrest". He was Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak who dominated the Indian political scene and journalists for two decades.

Chirol described him as "one of the most dangerous pioneers of disaffection". "He was the triumphant champion of Hindu orthodoxy", he wrote, "the high priest of Ganesh, the inspired prophet of a new nationalism which in the name of Sivaji would cast out the hated *Melachas* and restore the glories of Mahratta history. The government feared him. His activity was unceasing. He disdained none of the arts which make for popularity. . . . In private and public, through his speeches and through his newspapers, he worked upon the prejudices and passion of both the educated and the uneducated and especially upon the crude enthusiasm of the young.... He had been one of the first champions of *Swadeshi* as an economic weapon in the struggle against British rule and he saw in the adoption of the boycott with all the lawlessness it involved, an unprecedented opportunity of stimulating the active forces of disaffection."

Chirol said that Tilak relied on the enthusiastic support of men like Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose, who were his political disciples though their religious and social views greatly

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differed from his. Chirol noted that not even Gokhale with all his moral and intellectual force could stem the flowing tide of Tilak's popularity in Maharashtra. Barristers, teachers and, in fact, the large majority of the educated class worshipped him and his propaganda filtered down even to the labourers in the cities and the ryots in the villages. "His house was a place of pilgrimage for the disaffected from all parts of India" Chirol said. "His reputation for profound learning... his trenchant style, his indefatigable activity, the glamour of his philanthropy, his accessibility to high and low, his many acts of genuine kindness, the personal magnetism which, without any great physical advantage he exerted upon most of those who came in contact with him and especially upon the young, combined to equip him more fully than any other Indian politician for the leadership of the revolutionary movement." Tilak was the first Indian to understand the political importance of mass communication. He was also the first to exploit conservative religious sentiment for political work. Tilak's methods as a journalist were not those of the Bengali journalists. In his own words, "the Bengal journalists sought to teach people how to criticise the bureaucracy and at the same time keep oneself safe, bodily at least, if not pecuniarily," but this was foreign to Tilak's nature.

An Indian historian has noted that the most paradoxical aspect of the Indian ferment was that "new ideas and aspirations were being thrust upon a traditional society the bulk of which was still far from education and modernism. The unrest wanted to be comprehensive enough to appeal to the old and the young, the illiterate and the educated, the reactionary and the nihilist alike." Alfred Lyall was surprised at the strange spectacle in certain parts of India "of a party capable of resort to methods at once reactionary and revolutionary ; of men who offer prayers and sacrifices to ferocious divinities and denounce the government by seditious journalism, preaching primitive superstition in the modern form of leading articles."

"The rise of radical nationalism in India", says an Indian writer, "which became marked after 1904 was at once a conservative and a revolutionary phenomenon. It drew its

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inspiration on the one hand from the reaction towards Indian religion and Indian way of life of which the chief exponents had been Dayanand Saraswathi and Swami Vivekananda in the last quarter of the 19th century. On the other hand, it tries to apply to the Indian situation methods of mass agitation and even terrorism borrowed from the west."

Tilak disguised his political movement behind a religious revival by organising the Ganesh festival. He gave it a secular garb by bringing in Sivaji the founder of the Mahratta empire and reviving in the minds of the people memories of the glorious past. He denied it was an anti-Muslim gesture and said : "Our political aspirations need all the strength which the worship of a *Swadeshi* (native) here is likely to inspire in our minds. For this purpose, what greater hero than Sivaji could be found in Indian history ?"

Tilak's achievement was to give for the first time to the nationalist movement a much broader basis, than neo-western liberalism could ever supply. A Western observer wrote that it was in the press rather than on the platform that Indian politicians, whether "extreme" or merely "advanced" were apt to let themselves go. "They write down to the level of their larger audiences." Lord Morley said about articles in the language press : "It is said these incendiary articles are mere froth. Yes, they are froth but froth stained with bloodshed." The writer we have quoted continued; "Even when they contain no definite incitement to murder, no direct exhortation to revolt, they will show how systematically, how persistently the wells of Indian public opinion have been poisoned for years past by those who claim to represent the intelligence and enlightenment of modern India. Only too graphically also do they illustrate one of the most unpleasant characteristic features of the literature of Indian unrest—namely the insidious appeals to the Hindu scriptures and the Hindu deities and its deliberate vilification of everything English. Calumny and abuse combined with a wealth of sacred imagery supply the place of any serious process of reasoning..."

In 1906, the Viceroy, Lord Minto, was worried over the close connection between the Congress and the language press.

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In a letter to the Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley, he said : "One cannot disguise from oneself the danger ahead—the close connection of Congress with the vernacular press, generally disloyal...while at home political agitators from India, in close cooperation with members of Parliament are, I am afraid, bringing influence to bear on H.M.'s Government which may make things very difficult here."

Lovet Fraser, editor of the *Times of India*, accused the government at home of having instigated men like C.J. O'Donnell to write to Indian leaders like Surendranath Bannerjee with the intention of keeping the anti-partition agitation alive and affording the liberal ministers an opportunity to reopen the issue of partition. O'Donnell had written to Bannerjee in March, 1906: "Keep on agitating and do so effectively. Large mass meetings are the most useful...you have the justest of causes and I hope you will make your voice heard. Everything depends on you in India and remember a Whig does nothing unless pressed."

Minto saw for the first time in December, 1906, "a direct attempt to sow disaffection or rather revolt in the native army" in the extracts from the Indian press including one from the Bombay language paper, *Vihari*, placed before him. The viceroy thought : "If tampering with the Indian Army were to increase and if there were any signs of its gaining a foothold, it would be impossible to shut one's eyes to the danger one is face to face with risks here which it is impossible to express to people at home without being looked upon as an alarmist." Minto believed that the inflammatory articles in the Indian press "hurled contempt and hatred at the administration. If this journalism was merely an expression of impossible ideas it would not have mattered much but a good deal of it was direct instigation to get rid of the British."

In June, 1907, Lord Kitchner, commander-in-chief, in a secret minute mentioned the "harmful influence which the native press is having on the native army". "I have had occasion", he said, "to notice the extent of this evil before now, but within the last few months so much additional

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evidence has been brought to my notice that I have no hesitation in saying that from a military point of view I am convinced that the time has now come when it is absolutely necessary that we should take steps to put an end to or at least to modify the very mischievous effect which the native press is now unfortunately having on the Indian Army."

Minto began to take action against the Indian press in 1906. He launched many prosecutions which brought him into conflict with the Secretary of State, Lord Morley. In June, 1906, *Punjabee*, a Lahore newspaper was prosecuted and its editor was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In the same year, the editor of *Hindu Swarajya*, a Bombay newspaper, was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Morley was not quite happy with the campaign against the press and he wrote to Minto : "Press prosecutions and editorial imprisonments are delicate things with a strongly Liberal House of Commons in front of one. I think it is only too likely that we shall before long be in for some measures of the repressive sort. But before entering on that policy, we must have consultation and discussion."

There were protest demonstrations and unrest in Punjab following the conviction of the editor of the *Punjabee*. Minto wrote to a worried Morley : "The *Punjabee* is really owned by Lajpat Rai, one of the most advanced Congress leaders and I have no doubt the action of the paper was deliberately prompted. It may be open to doubt if the Punjab Government should have prosecuted or whether it should have been left to the police officer concerned...to prosecute the paper off his own bat for libel. I am inclined to think the Punjab Government was right." The Government of India wished to support the Punjab Government strongly because sedition was spreading rapidly in the province, Minto said.

Any lukewarm support of the local Government was fraught with danger. Elsewhere, the utterances of newspapers were growing outrageous, he said. The Government could not ignore them. To punish them lightly would only make matters worse because it would give the newspaper the publicity a seditious editor sought. Severe treatment was the only remedy.

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"It is a question whether we can count on inflammatory writing falling flat or whether we consider it so dangerous that we must, by some means or other, put a stop to it", the viceroy told the secretary of state. Morley said so long as press offences were dealt with by courts of law, justice might be done but prosecutions without the process of law were grave matters. He advised the viceroy not to forget the susceptibilities of the people at home "to the virtues of an unfettered press....So I do hope you will keep a sharp hand over the local Governments and bid them seek orders from you in matters of this delicacy."

The Government of India admitted that some press prosecutions "were foolish" and to ensure legality, it asked the Home Department to draw up regulations for press control. The viceroy realised that the Anglo-Indian press was equally responsible in fomenting discontent but in a different way. He referred to a letter in an Anglo-Indian newspaper written by a "Britisher" and said : "One could not have read anything much more worse—the bitterness of the writer's demand for immediate punishment of native political organisations and his eagerness to be selected to administer that punishment himself. Nothing could be worse than the native press but the low standard Britisher can do much to increase the evil."

However, little was done to check the Anglo-Indian press which carried on a tirade against Indians, while restrictions on the Indian press were tightened. In June, 1907, the Government of India published a resolution "warning all newspapers against publishing seditious matter and authorising local Governments to institute prosecutions for sedition. The resolution said : "The Government of India have recently had under their consideration the unbridled licence of certain publications of the press throughout India. They have also considered the deleterious moral effect which such publications are having throughout the country. The governor-general in council is convinced that such a state of things cannot be allowed to continue and it is, therefore, resolved that in all cases where matter tending to create sedition, ill-will towards government, of ill-feeling between the various races inhabiting

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India has been published in any newspaper or other publication, local Governments and administrations shall be empowered to proceed against those responsible for all such publications under the existing powers of the law." The viceroy said in justification of the resolution, that the country required the "preservation of the *izzat* of the local authorities which was in the eyes of many people much more important than the rectification of grievances." He added that the press had begun to influence the army and this was "too grave a menace to ignore."

The year 1907 saw a series of arrests and prosecutions of editors and journalists and confiscation of presses. The editor of *Hindustan*, Dina Nath was arrested in June, 1907, for complicity in the charges brought against the editor of *India* in Gujranwala (Punjab). In July, the editor of *Yugantar* of Calcutta was prosecuted for sedition and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. The magistrate ordered the confiscation of the press where the paper was printed. In the same month, the editor of *Sonar Bangla* also of Calcutta was arrested. Later in the month, the police raided the office of *Bande Mataram* and the editor, Aurobindo Ghose, was arrested for sedition. The editors of *Hindustan* and *India* were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment each.

But apparently these convictions did not produce results, for the governor of Bengal pointed out : "We can put the wretched editor into jail but until we can also stop a paper upon conviction for sedition, I do not think that we can achieve any result worth the cost." The governor said some "miserable and unworthy person" achieved martyrdom and the paper "goes on all the same, stirring up greater bitterness." Press prosecutions, prescriptions and confiscations became the order of the day in 1907 and 1908. Tilak, himself, was sent to prison for articles in his paper *Mahratta* and Aurobindo Ghose, editor of *Bande Mataram*, sought asylum in the French territory of Pondicherry. Police raids, house searches and espionage became everyday affairs in the lives of Indian journalists. In January, 1910, the viceroy told the newly enlarged Legislative Council that the government would no longer tolerate the

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freedom of a revolutionary press which led to outbreaks of violence. He had said earlier in another speech that he did not think India was ripe for freedom of the press.

On February 8, 1910, the Indian Press Act which imposed fresh restrictions on the press was passed. Between 1910 and 1914, several demands for security were made on the press. Two papers in Bombay which were asked to furnish a security of Rs. 5,000 each, closed down. There were cases of paper in other provinces closing down being unable to pay security. A statement by the Press Association of India, formed in 1915 to protect the interests of the press, said that up to 1917, 22 newspapers had been asked to furnish security and 18 had shut down. Between 1917 and 1919, 963 newspapers and printing presses which had existed before the Press Act of 1910 had been proceeded against under the Act. The statement mentioned that 173 new printing presses and 129 newspapers were killed at birth through demands for security. The government collected about Rs. 5 lakhs during the first year of the Press Act through securities and forfeitures. Over 500 publications were prescribed under the Act.

As the gulf between the rulers and the people widened still further with the wave of repression and action against the press, political leadership passed from Bengal to Maharashtra where Tilak held sway through his journals and on the platform. Tilak was the soul of Indian politics in western India. His audacity and adventurous spirit, his geniality and easy accessibility made him an ideal leader of a popular movement. It was said of him: "There are abler politicians in India as also men gifted with better constructive statesmanship but no politician or publicist comes up to him in point of tenacity of purpose, courage and bulldog determination."

Tilak began his journalism career when he and his associates started the *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Mahratta* (English) in January, 1881. It was announced that the *Kesari* would deal with political and economic developments in the country and also world events. It would write objectively and impartially and truth would be its watchword. "The evils of flunkeyism and flattery", the sponsors said, "have been growing since the

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beginning of the imperial rule and surely every honest man will admit that it is harmful to the true interests of the country." In its first editorial, the *Kesari* compared newspapers to night watchmen and said their responsibility was to keep executive officers in wholesome fear of public opinion. It declared its intention of improving social conditions by frankly telling the people what was bad and harmful. The *Mahratta* aimed at the educated section of the community "who required to be provided with material for thinking intelligently on the important topics of the day." While the *Kesari* sought to educate the public and promote popular agitation, the *Mahratta* set out as the authoritative spokesman of educated public opinion in Maharashtra. In addition to discussing at length every political question, it presented to its readers a selection of views from foreign and Indian journals.

The two journals became an immediate success. The *Kesari* became by the end of 1882 the largest circulated language paper in the country and the *Mahratta* was acknowledged as the leading mouthpiece of Indian political thinking in western India. "The two papers" one writer remarked, "owed their success to virile, impassioned writing, animated at all times by lofty patriotism and the courage of conviction."

Tilak firmly believed in the benefits of English education and strove hard to promote it. He used to say that English education like Tiger's milk was a strong diet. If Indian youth had an English education, the country's freedom would not be far away, he said. "Tilak was a great writer in every sense of the term", an admirer has written. "Yet, oddly enough, he was a writer who disliked writing. Most of his journalistic writings were dictated by him and they read like speeches. This, however, served to increase their effectiveness for when his views on heated issues were read to groups in villages—this was the usual way of spreading the message of his newspapers—people accepted them as if Tilak were speaking to them in person. His style was always direct and his sentences short and crisp. His writings were crystal clear and went straight to the heart of his readers. They were full of quotations from the ancient Sanskrit works, popular sayings, historic

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parallels, apt metaphors and, above all, pregnant with forceful and original ideas. Tilak was an editor-philosopher who had a message to give to his readers and he gave it with fire and imagination . . . . Week after week, he poured out his soul on day-to-day problems, economic questions, philosophical ideas, historical researches, literature and art. Whatever subject he touched, he gave it a new lustre and lucidity."

The editor of *Subhodha Patrika*, an influential reformist weekly, said that Tilak's writings had a "bullet-like piercing quality—the shot told because it was meant to tell. . . .Behind the *Kesari* was an editor who knew his facts thoroughly, who knew the art of selecting the right thing at the right moment and whose powerful pen was wielded with a single pointed aim to make his political gospel a living sentiment among his people—and, above all, who was absolutely indifferent to dangers in furthering the cause of his country's independence which was the supreme aim of his life."

In an interview Tilak said: "When I started the *Kesari*, people asked me why I was going to publish it in Marathi. They said, 'None will read it'. But I was determined to publish it in Marathi and I said my decision was final. They then asked me to reserve at least two columns for English material. Again I replied categorically that it was impossible. *Kesari* was for the people and the people were sure to give it a rousing reception. Today, the *Mahratta* (English weekly) has to be financed from the funds of *Kesari*. When we started *Kesari* we had to make almost a new language. In the old Marathi there was plenty of writing on devotion and philosophy; also the ballad writers had introduced an element of heroics into it. But to discuss serious matters of politics, to attack and rebut opponents, to crush them with satire and ridicule, for all this, the old Marathi was of very little use. And so we were forced to develop a new terminology to make our writings effective. A man who feels intensely, who is burning with new ideas finds words to express them. He becomes, indeed, capable of creating a new language."

Tilak believed that lack of political freedom was at the root of all evils in the body politic of India. He was not an

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opponent of social reform but said it should wait till the achievement of political freedom when it could be carried out without difficulty. The Anglo-Indian papers, especially the *Times of India* and *Pioneer*, called Tilak a bigoted Hindu leader dreaming of a Mahratta empire. Their campaign against him descended to absurd and indecent levels.

Tilak first clashed with the government when he criticised inadequate relief measures during the great famine and plague which gripped Maharashtra and other parts of the country in 1896-1897. Through the *Kesari* he told the government that it was their responsibility to save the lives of people dying from starvation and they "will neglect it at their own peril." He warned them that the peasants might rebel against them if steps were not taken immediately to relieve their distress. He published eye-witness accounts of conditions in villages and wrote: "People are selling their cattle for the price of grass and grass is being sold almost at the price of gold. Thousands are leaving the villages to go to towns and those who have remained behind will also have to leave soon." Tilak told the people: "If you fail to get what is due to you from the Government you do not deserve to live." Kesari devoted many columns to news of famine and relief and it taught the people to claim their rights. It exposed the high handed behaviour of the officials. It brought hope and cheer to hundreds of famine-stricken families. "The famine of 1896", says a writer, "largely decided the ultimate course of Tilak's career. From then on we see him not only as a leader in the fight for national independence but also as the special champion of the peasants whose emancipation became the purpose and passion of his life."

During the plague which ravaged Pune and the countryside, Tilak appealed to the Government to seek the cooperation of the people and direct the officials to show a little more common sense and consideration. He led a citizens' deputation to the Special Officer, W.C. Rand, to protest against the harsh and oppressive measures taken by him to deal with plague. *Kesari* wrote that popular resentment had reached breaking point and it asked: "What people on earth, however docile,

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will continue to submit to this sort of mad terrors?" Tilak was not opposed to anti-plague measures; he only pleaded with the officials to treat the Indians with decency and humanity when they went to their houses for disinfection measures and to segregate plague victims.

Opposition to Special Officer Rand culminated in his murder along with that of another official. The government thought there had been a conspiracy to murder Rand and that Tilak was the moving spirit behind it. When people had complained of British soldiers, 'misbehaviour' Tilak advised them to use "force in self-defence which is legal". Tilak condemned the repressive measures which followed Rand's murder in two articles in *Kesari* headed: "Has the government lost its head ?" and "To rule is not to wreak vengeance". Friends warned him that his language was harsh and might get him into trouble. Tilak replied: "I write strong language, I admit. But my heart is full of indignation at the injustice which is being perpetrated by the officials and the words which come out are the natural outburst of the feelings inside me. I am convinced that I am within the limits of the law in criticising the government's measures, however strong the language I use."

Four weeks later, Tilak was arrested on a charge of writing seditious articles. The Bombay governor's action was a sequel to the attack on Tilak by the Anglo-Indian press led by the *Times of India*. Tilak hit back at them in a series of articles in *Kesari*. He wrote: "English editors have begun to rave in a fit of anger . . . . The Anglo-Indian community is at present exceedingly prejudiced and is in a fit of frenzy. It is not in a mood to listen to reason. . . . In our view, Indian newspapermen have done their duty admirably in this crisis and if anybody is to be blamed it is the government itself because it turned a deaf ear to the genuine complaints of the public. All this talk of branding Indian newspapermen as seditious is nothing but an attempt to evade responsibility and to put the blame on others."

Tilak said. "To create or lead peaceful opposition to foreign rule and to rouse a spirit of resistance is not sedition.

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True sedition is to incite people to armed rebellion in order to secure independence or the redress of a wrong. If anybody follows the line of direct incitement to violence, then it is sedition and it is the duty of government to punish such people. But to inflict punishment indiscriminately on the guilty and innocent alike is certainly atrocious. If the government abides by the law and keeps its head, then the people will also remain peaceful. The responsibility of avoiding an armed revolution is on the leaders of the public; so also is it on the government officials, but if the latter do not do their duty and the people take to violence, it is sheer injustice to hold the leaders responsible for the violence because they preach patriotism, devotion to religion and resistance to injustice which is not incitement. To work against the British is included among the crimes listed in the category of sedition. This means that any article which is likely to lead to a revolution or a rebellion can come under the sedition section (of the I.P.C.). At the same time, the explanation which is appended to this section states that to point out the mistakes and injustices of the administration is not sedition and, therefore, we see no reason to desist from strongly criticising any government action."

The Anglo-Indian papers tore the words in these articles out of context and twisted them to suggest they were seditious and preached murder. The *Times of India*, which published extracts from the articles, said: "The atmosphere which such teaching must have created is precisely the atmosphere in which violence to individuals, hatred of government and widespread contempt for authority and law would necessarily grow. . . ."

Tilak's trial began on September 8, 1897, and lasted six days. In his summing up, the Judge, Strachey, defined "disaffection" as simply "want of affection" which he further explained as "ill-will, dislike and enmity." Tilak was sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment. Tilak told an official who talked to him after the verdict: "The Anglo-Indian newspapers have branded me anti-British, but they forget that I pay the highest tribute to the British and their character by following

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their example in opposing what I consider evil in the administration. Then again, as there is no Parliamentary system in India, somebody has to perform the duties of the opposition. I have constituted myself and my two newspapers as the permanent opposition of H.M.'s Government of India."

Attempts were made prior to the verdict by Tilak's friends to persuade him to apologise to the government and save himself from prosecution and imprisonment. Among them was Motilal Ghosh, editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta, who was anxious that Tilak should not challenge the government at that stage. Tilak replied to them: "My position among the people depends entirely upon my character and if I am cowed down by the prosecution—in my heart of hearts I know the case for the prosecution is the weakest that was ever placed before a jury—I think living in Maharashtra is as good as living in the Andamans. . . . Their object is to humiliate the Poona leaders and I think they will not find in me a *kutcha* reed as they did in some others. As an honest and honourable man, how can I plead guilty to the charge of entertaining ideas of sedition when I had none? If I am convicted, the sympathy of my countrymen will support me in my trouble."

Indian newspapers without exception condemned the verdict and Justice Strachey's definition of "disaffection". *The Hindu* wrote: "The news (conviction of Tilak) has been received everywhere with intense grief and with a sense of humiliation. It is not law and justice that have been vindicated, but that the policy of reaction, which for some time the enemies of the Indian people have been urging, has triumphed. It has been the great object of these unscrupulous men whose one aim is to keep the people of India in a condition of slavery, to strike a crushing blow at the party of progress and they now have succeeded in their object. They have succeeded in producing depression and despair everywhere." The *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta said: "It seemed the judge and the advocate-general had changed places . . . . What with the tendencies of the times, the present temper of the European community in India and the prejudice excited against the

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Mahrattas of Poona since the murder of Rand and Lt. Ayerest, the verdict was practically a foregone conclusion."

Tilak resumed the editorship of the *Kesari* in July, 1899, with these words. "Despite the new situation now created (by the novel definition of sedition), we are determined to continue to work for the attainment of our objective (*Swaraj*). We need not be afraid of anybody so long as our hearts are pure and unsullied by hatred."

In the thick of the agitation against the rigours of the anti-plague measures in Pune, Gokhale figured in a controversy which brought him publicity in the Indian press. Gokhale, who was in London, in an interview to the *Manchester Guardian* accused British soldiers in Pune of rape among other charges while carrying out anti-plague measures in Indian homes. Subsequently, he withdrew the charges and wrote a letter of apology to the governor of Bombay. While the *Dnyanaprakash* and the *Indian Spectator* of Bombay praised him for acting like a gentleman, many other papers were critical. The *Kaiser-i-Hind* wrote: "This much is certain that he has much compromised his reputation." Tilak's papers were far from sympathetic. The *Mahratta* could not appreciate why the "humiliated professor had withdrawn all the charges when he was unable to substantiate one (rape) of them." In a letter to Motilal Ghosh, Tilak wrote: "I think in me they (government) will not find a *kutcha* reed as they did in Prof. Gokhale."

The cult of violence had taken root in the Indian soil and the use of the bomb for political ends became frequent in the early years of this century. Tilak was accused of fomenting violence by the Anglo-Indian press and he had to pay the price for it. In 1908, in a bomb outrage in Muzaffarpur in Bihar the wife and daughter of a European barrister were killed. The bomb had been intended for D.H. Kingsford, district magistrate, who had achieved notoriety with his savage sentences in political cases. The Anglo-Indian press clamoured for tightening of screws on the Indian press and drastic action against the nationalists. The *Pioneer* wrote: "The wholesale arrest of the acknowledged terrorists in a city

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or district, coupled with an intimation that on any repetition of the offence, ten of them would be shot for every life sacrificed would soon put down the practice. . ."

An anonymous correspondent wrote to the *Englishman*: "I submit that powers should be given to the authorities to suppress agitators by the most ready and simple methods; and were a few of these worthy agitators flogged in public by the town sweepers and their press confiscated, much of the glamour of the righteousness of their agitation for the people would be destroyed and their dupes would see them as they are and not in the kaleidescopic light which they endeavour to attract to themselves." The *Times of India* charged the Indian press and well-known speakers with the responsibility for "working ferments in the yeasty brains." The *Statesman* wrote: "The new school (of Tilak) not only preached a doctrine of unreasoning hatred of England but hinted at the necessity of deeds which were only possible if those who did them were willing to die for the country. Those apostles of violence scoffed at the mendicant policy as they called constitutional agitation and advocated a vague and undefined but obviously mischievous gospel of self-help. There can be little doubt that their teaching has had the effect of turning the heads of a number of enthusiasts." The *Englishman* went to the extent of suggesting that Europeans should organise for self-defence.

Tilak replied to these attacks saying that the fundamental cause of the bomb outrage was not the political agitation of the extremists but the repressive policy of the government which was trying to throttle public opinion by gagging the Indian press and prohibiting public meetings. Goaded by the Ango-Indian press, the government took the offensive against the Indian press. The Bengal Government put on the black list many papers that were carrying on the anti-partition agitation and a campaign of prosecutions was started. One of these prosecuted was Upadhya, editor of *Sandhya* who told the courts: "I do not want to take part in the trial because I do not believe that in carrying out my humble share of the God-appointed mission of *Swaraj* I am in any way accountable

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to the alien people who happen to rule over us and whose interest is, and must necessarily be, in the way of our true national development.'

Tilak himself became the victim of the panic of the rulers. He was prosecuted for two articles appearing in *Kesari* and sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment on July 22, 1908, by an Indian judge. The action had been taken under the Indian Newspapers (incitement to offences) Act which was passed in that year and which gave wide powers to the government to proceed against seditious writings. Surendranath Bannerjee, Tilak's political opponent, wrote in the *Bengalee*: "With all respect for the judge, we regard the sentence as monstrous—as utterly out of proportion to the offence alleged to have been committed and as one which will be universally condemned by our countrymen and all right thinking men." The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote: "If Mr. Tilak were tried in England and two jurors were in his favour, the presiding judge would not have accepted the verdict of the majority but would have ordered a re-trial and the accused would not have been convicted till the jury were unanimous. What then could have led Mr. Justice Devar to follow a procedure which no judge in England would venture to follow?"

When the anti-partition agitation was in full swing in Bengal, Tilak realised the potential of the ferment in Bengal for the cause of Indian nationalism and he joined hands with Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose and other Extremists in Bengal to forge an alliance, which caused deep concern not only to the government but also to the Congress leadership. Tilak told a Calcutta audience in 1906: "If you forget your grievances by hearing words of sympathy then the cause is gone. You must make a permanent cause of grievance. Store up grievances till they are removed. Partition grievances will be the edifice for the regeneration of India. The grievance is not only against an unpopular act of an alien regime but against the alien regime itself."

The widening cleavage between the Moderates and the Extremists surfaced on the eve of the Calcutta session of the

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Congress in 1906. The Moderates were under fire from Pal and the young radicals, products of the anti-partition agitation. No love was lost between Pal and Surendranath Bannerjee or between Bannerjee and Motilal Ghosh. There was continual sniping between the *A.B. Patrika* and the *Bengalee*. The Anglo-Indian papers added to the confusion by playing off one Congress faction against the other and Muslims against the Hindus. Tilak wrote in the *Kesari*: "Dadabhai (Naoroji who presided over the Calcutta Congress and proclaimed India's right to *Swaraj*), the venerable priest of patriotism has joined in holy wedlock the National Congress and India's right to *Swaraj*. This marriage is not entirely approved by some of those who claim paternity of the Congress but now that the marriage is effected, no one has the power to dissolve it or hinder its final consummation—the attainment of *Swaraj*."

On the opening day of the Congress session, *Bande Mataram* published an article titled: "The man of the present and the man of the future", comparing Dadabhai Naoroji and Tilak. It described Naoroji as "worn and aged, bowed down with the burden of half a century of toil and labour . . . a man of the past, reminding us of a generation that is passing away, ideals that have lost their charm, methods that have been found to be futile, and energy and hope, once buoyant and full of life which now live on only in wearied and decrepit old age, phantom-like, still babbling exploded generalities and dead formulas." A similar sentiment was expressed by another writer: "The Moderates . . . made on occasions fiery and eloquent speeches but their British listeners well knew that their fire did not burn; they flourished swords but they had no edge on them. How could the rulers take the Moderates seriously when they were convinced that the spiritual basis of their politics was a full-some adoration of the British way of life and, above all, a sincere belief that the British ruled India by divine dispensation?"

What did Gokhale think of Tilak ? This is what he said of him : "Mr. Tilak has a matchless capacity for intrigue and he is not burdened with an exacting conscience. As a result he is often about to play for his own hand when to all appearances

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he is fighting for a principle only. His great talents, his simple habits, his sturdy and dauntless spirit and above all the cruel persecution which he has had to bear at the hands of the government have won for him the hearts of millions in all parts of the country. And the general affection and admiration make it comparatively easy for him to play his game."

Secretary of State Morley was not happy with the prosecution of Tilak for sedition and his conviction. He wrote to Mintor : "I confess (after reading one of the offending editorials in *Kesari*) that at the first glance, I feel as if it might have been passed over.... Bad enough to warrant a persecution if you wanted one on general political grounds, but not at all so bad as to make a prosecution inevitable. . . of course. Clarke (Sir George Clarke, governor of Bombay) might easily have convinced me that the proceedings were wise if he had shown that the state of his Presidency made a severe lesson and stern example necessary. But I gather from his letters that he thinks nothing so ill of his people and he plainly has not weighed all the ulterior consequences of every sort. If his people are in an inflammable state, the trial will inflame them still further. If they are not, he could afford to let Tilak's shuffling stuff with all its vicious innuendoes and mischievous possibilities go by."

Morley, who felt that the prosecution was a "grievous error" added : "The conviction of Tilak fills me with anything but exultation." "If you had done me the honour to seek my advice as well as that of your lawyers", Morley had written to Clarke a week earlier, "I am clear that I shall have been for leaving him alone. And I find no reason to believe that any mischief that Tilak could have done would have been as dangerous as the mischief that will be done by his sentence. We must keep order but excess of severity is not the path of order, on the contrary it is the path to the bomb."

Writing to Morley about his impressions of Tilak, Clarke said : "I can't help thinking that long ago he might have been taken in hand but a high caste Brahmin—I am told—never forgives imprisonment." Six months earlier the governor had played host to Tilak and 70 other local editors of the language

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press. When the party was over, the governor later said, "To my astonishment Tilak got up and thanked me very nicely in the name of the assembly. I shook hands with them all, including Tilak, and we parted with great cordiality, they cheering me most heartily."

Replying to Clarke, Morley said : "I like this high caste Brahmin of a man never forgiving the stain of imprisonment, as you say, quite a man worth trying to get hold of and I dare say you are right in thinking it might have been possible at an earlier stage. Alas !" Minto, however, assured King Edward VII that Tilak's conviction and other prosecutions and punishments "had the most marked effect in reassuring the local population as to the determination of the Government of India to maintain order and put down the preaching of anarchy and murder."

The Anglo-Indian press spread a scare on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the 1857 Mutiny that the nationalists were planning a revolt in Punjab under the leadership of Lajpat Rai. These papers published wild stories about Lajpat Rai having collected 1,00,000 men to attack the Lahore fort on May 10, 1907. Detachments of the British cavalry and artillery paraded the streets of Lahore. The press in Britain carried sensational reports about the Punjab. The *Daily Mail* reported that an attempted revolt whose object was to proclaim Lajpat Rai Maharaja of Punjab had been crushed. The Evening Standard reported a riot in Delhi and said that the statue of Queen Victoria had been mutilated and European women insulted by their *ayahs*. The Anglo-Indian press cried for action against the Indian press.

Lajpat Rai was arrested on May 8, 1907 in Lahore and deported to Burma. In a letter to the *Times of India*, Gokhale said that although Lajpat Rai's language was at times a "trifle strong" his aims and methods had always been "strictly constitutional". Gokhale said the Punjab police had been misled by the police and secret service. "The government has misjudged the volume and character of the unrest prevalent in the Punjab," he said. "People in this country believe and will continue to believe that there never was any real chance of a

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second mutiny and that Lajpat Rai has been sacrificed to the nervous apprehension that suddenly seized the authorities." The viceroy wanted to enact a law to curb the press but the secretary of state opposed it despite a warning from the king that the "freedom of the press although an undoubted boon to a free people under self-government is apt to be abused by a people under the autocratic government of another race." A press law was, however, passed in 1908.

Writing to Dunlop Smith, private secretary to Minto, Lovat Fraser, editor of the *Times of India* said in July 1909 : "I lunched with the Aga Khan....I am sure you realise as keenly as he appears to do, that probably our greatest danger in India is the likelihood of an entente so much desired by many of the younger and abler Mohammadans, between Hindus and Musalmans. Men like the Aga Khan feel that in pressing for large separate treatment for Mohammadans, they are fighting our battle much more than their own. We have far more to lose than the Muslims by an entente between Islam and Hinduism."

The foundation for the special treatment to Muslims was laid by Minto in 1906 when he received a Muslim deputation led by the Aga Khan and conceded their demand for separate voting rights. This was in line with the open partisanship of the Anglo-Indian press with the Muslims and they gloated over the success of the deputation. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* described the deputation as a "got-up affair fully engineered by interested officials" to whitewash their designs....The authorities wanted a few simple minded men of position to give them a certificate of good conduct. They knew the Hindus would not do it, so they began operation among the older classes of Musalmans." The full implications of the concession made by Minto were not immediately realised by nationalists and the Indian press. The *Advocate* of Lucknow "refused to believe that any British statesman will give countenance to such a pro-Muslim movement." Even Tilak's colleague N.C. Kelkar, editor of *Mahratta*, expressed his satisfaction that the isolation of the Muslim community was breaking and said that even a mere political aspiration in the

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Mohammadans was a national asset for all India. "We for one can find it in us", he said, "to rejoice, if as a reward for not joining the Congress, the Mohammadans are appointed to the membership of the Supreme Executive Council. A Mohammadan governor of a province would be still more welcome." The *Hindu* spoke of "the intelligent awakening on the part of some of the members of the Muslim community to an apprehension of some of the factors which keep their material position in an unsatisfactory state. This is the first important impulse which leads to the amelioration in the condition of any community. The striving after a more elevated position in society than they now occupy is a worthy ambition, as the viceroy said, on the part of the descendants of a ruling race." The *Hindu Patriot* of Calcutta, a Congress paper, praised the viceroy for his performance. The *Indian Mirror* also of Calcutta, wrote : "We are in entire sympathy with the aims and aspirations of our Mohammadan brethren. Hindus and Mohammadans are after all children of the same soil. Their interests are the same and their hopes and yearnings must be the same."

When World War I broke out in 1914, Tilak was among the very first Indian nationalists to declare his support to the war effort. In a letter to the press he declared : "I have no hesitation in saying that the act of violence which have been committed in different parts of India are not only repugnant to me but have only, in my opinion, unfortunately retarded to a great extent the pace of our political progress. Whether looked at from an individual or from a public point of view, they deserve, as I have said before, to be equally condemned." He referred to the war and said : "It is the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor, to support and assist H.M.'s Government to the best of his ability."

This change of attitude in Tilak was warmly welcomed by the *Advocate of India* of Bombay, an Anglo-Indian paper which called Tilak "one of our loyalist and truest friends" and asked his detractors to "admit their mistake and make at the earliest possible moment the amends honourable." Tilak wrote many articles in *Kesari* urging Indian youth to enlist in the army and

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fight in the war. At a conference of leaders in Bombay called by the Governor, Lord Willingdon, to promote the war efforts Tilak said the enthusiasm of the people could be roused better if the appeal was coupled with a promise of Home Rule. The governor did not like this reference to Home Rule and ordered Tilak to sit down. Tilak walked out in protest followed by others including Gandhi and N.C. Kelkar, editor of *Mahratta*. Tilak later started a Home Rule movement which had similar aims as the one similarly named and started by Annie Besant in 1916. When the political reforms were announced in 1919, he favoured their acceptance while Gandhi opposed them. He argued in favour of what he called "Responsive Cooperation" with the rulers and broke away with Gandhi along with his one time extremist colleague, Bipin Chandra Pal, when the non-cooperation movement was launched in 1919.

The *Mahratta* wrote on October 4, 1914 : "Indian hearts will be thrilled to know that Indian troops have landed in France." The award of the first Victoria Cross to an Indian made banner headlines in the Indian press. In the Imperial Legislative Council, Surendranath Bannerjee suggested that the cost of the Indian Expeditionary Force should be borne, contrary to precedents, by the Indian Exchequer.

Annie Besant, who launched her Home Rule League in September 1916, started two newspapers, a weekly and a daily, to support her cause. She expressed her goal in these words : "In political reform, we aim at the building up of complete self-government from village councils...to a national parliament equal in its powers to the legislative bodies of the self-governing colonies."

Bipin Chandra Pal said of Besant : "There is no other person to whom the heart of awakened India goes with greater reverence and deeper affection than it does to the strange woman from beyond the seas. She was the first to point out that educated India had lost faith not only in their ancient and medieval doctrines but also in their own powers and possibilities". K. Rama Rao said that to Annie Besant, journalism was a handmaid to nationalism. "Brought up in freedom, she displayed a fine contempt for the repressive laws of British

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India. She was a born controversialist, hitting hard, giving no quarter and asking for none."

Besant had figured in a controversy earlier when she protested against racial discrimination that was rampant in India. During the time Lord Minto was viceroy she issued an appeal to the viceroy and the European community to check and abstain from insult to Indians. She said : "Your excellency, your Indian and English children are bruising each other's hearts to the death and wrecking the future.... Oh ! raise your powerful voice to check the hatred that divides heart from heart, community from community. Speak strongly, as you alone can do, to these lower English who are destroying your work and undermining the Empire. Bid your officials everywhere to guard your Indian children and to shield them from outrage and from wrong." The appeal shocked Europeans who accused her of deliberately attempting to encourage racial antipathy. She was condemned by the governor of United Provinces who threatened to persuade the princes who were patrons of her college in Benares (Hindu Central College) to dissociate themselves from her. The Maharaja of Benares wrote to her a letter of protest. Lord Minto was angry with her. Besant told him : "I would not have issued the appeal had I thought for a moment that you would have disapproved. I am very sorry." The Indians rallied round her while the Europeans continued to suspect her.

Besant wrote this of Gandhi in *New India* in 1915 after she met him in Madras : "I was for the first time brought face to face with this great man known in this life as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was short of stature, not too robust in health but looked beautiful in his homespun dress of a Kathiawar farmer, simple but attractive. I looked in his eyes and saw through his eyes Jesus of Nazareth of old who stooped down in order to lift others. About him it was said he tried to save others but could not save himself. May it not be repeated of this great man."

Besant's *New India* was the old *Indian Standard* which she purchased and renamed in 1913. The *Madras Standard* started in 1877 as a tri-weekly by an Englishman, passed in 1892 into

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the hands of G. Parameswaran Pillai who converted it into a daily. Parameswaran Pillai who was 21 when he took over the *Standard* was a very influential public figure in Madras and his political views were considered radical. He was described as a "powerful speaker and a fearless fighter". He was of great help to Gandhi when he visited Madras in 1896 to gather support for the cause of Indians in South Africa.

New India became a powerful vehicle for Home Rule movement which dominated the political scene until the Besant's national leadership passed over to Gandhi. She wrote vigorous articles day after day championing the cause of Indian freedom and she came into conflict with the law more than once. Action was taken against her paper on a number of occasions under the Press Law of 1910 and the securities which she deposited were forfeited and fresh ones were demanded. However, Besant wrote fearlessly and in vehement language but without infringing the law and this caused a good deal of embarrassment to the government. Says a writer : "Many an eminent lawyer admitted that although Besant was not a lawyer she wrote in a manner which would baffle the best among lawyers who tried to discern in her remarkable articles a branch of the Press Act."

New India gave a much needed new tone to the entire press in India, said B.G. Horniman. "Before Besant entered journalism", he said, "the most valiant of editors, including myself, found it difficult to give free and fearless expression to their thoughts." When a security of Rs. 2,000 was demanded from *New India* in 1916 under the Press Act, *The Hindu* called it an "arbitrary step" taken "to undermine the influence of Mrs. Annie Besant, an Englishwoman of striking personality and generous instincts who has done splendid service in the cause of India, and who has recently given a powerful stimulus to the movement for self-government for India. The zeal and earnestness with which she is advocating the cause of Indian political development on the platform and in her paper, *New India*, have rightly earned for her the gratitude of the people of this country whose resentment and grief at this official action will be keen and poignant." Within four months the

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government forfeited the security and demanded a fresh one which Besant paid. In June, 1917, Besant and two of her associates were interned by the Madras Government under the Defence of India Rules but they were released in September. The *Madras Mail* criticised her release and said it would affect the prestige and authority of the local government. It appealed to the European community and conservative Indian opinion to rally round it and force the secretary of state to change the mind of the Government of India. The paper sent a cable to the secretary of state airing its views and threatened to launch a passive resistance campaign if its efforts to halt political reforms did not succeed. It secured the support of the leader of the non-Brahmin movement, Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetti who cabled to the secretary of state, supporting the *Madras Mail.* Earle Welby was the editor of the paper at that time and he later told Secretary of State Montague during his visit to Madras that the Besant incident had made him determined to resist all reform. He said that his was a daily newspaper and he did not think much of what he wrote ; that if he had been editing a weekly he might have watered down his language. After retirement Welby worked as the literary correspondent of the *Hindu* in London.

Besant was the most popular leader in the country and was chosen president of the Congress. But her popularity melted away when she opposed Gandhi and his non-cooperation movement. She supported the Rowlatt Act which the entire nationalist India opposed tooth and nail saying : "There is nothing in it which a good citizen can resist." Commenting on the incidents of violence which marked the non-cooperation movement, she wrote in *New India* : "Brickbats must be answered by bullets." *New India* became a weekly in 1929 and faded away.

There was a wave of press prosecutions and forfeitures of security all over the country following material law incidents in Punjab and the Jallianwalabagh massacre in 1919. Even the most respectable nationalist papers were not exempt from the repressive policy. There was a blackout of news from the Punjab and correspondents who managed to smuggle out

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reports were arrested and punished under a special law made for the purpose. Newspapers which strongly criticised the government were gagged and heavy security was demanded from them. One of the victims of the government's wrath was the *Bombay Chronicle*, which under the editorship of B.G. Horniman, published detailed reports of the Punjab horrors. Pre-censorship was imposed on the paper and for many days it came out with its editorial columns blank. Horniman himself was arrested and deported. In Punjab itself Kalinath Roy, editor of *Tribune*, was arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an editorial, "Blazing indiscretion", which had criticised the governor. The *Bombay Chronicle* was forced to close down and was allowed to resume publication after it paid a security of Rs. 10,000 and under strict censorship. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika's* security of Rs. 5,000 was forfeited and it was asked to furnish another (Rs. 10,000). *The Hindu* and the *Swadeshamitran* in Madras were also asked to furnish securities for articles published on the Punjab incidents.

When Gen. Dyer, the hero of the Jallianwalabagh massacre, returned to England he was interviewed on board the ship at Southampton by a *Daily Mail* reporter. Dyer said : "It was my duty, my horrible, dirty duty. I had to shoot. I had 30 seconds to make up my mind what action to take. Every Englishman I have met in India has approved my act, horrible as it was. . . ." The *Times of India*, however contradicted him and said : "Wherever the tragedy is discussed, there is heard nothing but loathing of the horrible circumstances which linked the slaughter at Jallianwalabagh with the name of an Englishman." The *Pioneer*, however, took an entirely opposite view and it published a number of letters which supported a proposal to set up a fund to present Sir Michael O'Dwyer, governor of Punjab, and Gen. Dyer with swords of honour "for their services in saving India from the horrors of another 1857." When the *Morning Post* of London opened a fund for the "man who saved India", money poured in from Anglo-Indian papers and Englishmen in India. The *Pioneer* and *Englishman* (Calcutta) sent Rs. 10,000 each. The Calcutta correspondent of the *Morning Post* collected Rs. 5,000 each

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from the *Madras Mail*, the *Civil and Military Gazette* and many other newspapers.

We have mentioned the *Bombay Chronicle* as one of the victims of the repressive policy followed by the government after the Punjab incidents. The paper was founded in 1913 by Sir Phirozeshah Mehta, veteran Congress leader of Bombay to fill a vacuum in that city where there were only Anglo-Indian newspapers and no nationalist English daily. Mehta easily raised the money required to start the paper and he appointed B.G. Horniman, an Englishman, as the editor. For three years, while he was alive, he kept tight control over its editorial policy. The *Chronicle* soon established itself as the foremost Indian English daily championing the nationalist cause. After Mehta's death, Chimanlal Setalvad took over as chairman of the Board of Directors which consisted mostly of Moderates. The paper faced many crises in its career and moved over as an ardent supporter of Gandhi and the non-cooperation movement with S.A. Brelvi as its editor.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya launched the *Leader*, later to become a great newspaper voicing moderate opinion under the editorship of C.Y. Chintamani, in Allahabad in 1909. With the exception of *The Hindu*, which adopted a professionalism which gave it an advantage over the British-owned *Madras Mail*, most Indian papers neglected the business side of their venture, and functioning under various official restrictions, they lived a hand to mouth existence, forced to live in the present rather than to build for the future.

The *Independent* of Lucknow was started by Pandit Motilal Nehru in 1919 and its first editor was Syed Hussain. The paper, however, did not prosper and had to close down in 1923.

In Bombay, *Young India* was started as a weekly by the Home Rule party in 1918, which later was taken over by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Justice Party in Madras organised by the non-Brahmin movement started its own paper, *Justice*, in 1918 and it was edited by the leader of the party Dr. T.M. Nair who wielded his pen and tongue with equal force and fluency. Later, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar took over the editorship. The *Justice* ceased publication when the Justice Party lost power in the 1930s.

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The influence of the language press was steadily growing during this period and it reached its peak after Gandhi took over the leadership of the nationalist movement. Speaking about its influence, Gokhale said in a speech in England that "although the educated classes in India numbered only a million in a population of 30 million, they constituted the 'brain' of the community. They did the thinking not only for themselves but also for their ignorant brethren. They controlled the Indian language press which shaped the thoughts and swayed the feelings not only of the 15 million literates in vernaculars whom it reached directly but also of many more who were indirectly under its influence."

In August, 1909, Lord Minto wrote to the princes of India on the prevailing unrest in the country and sought their opinion "with a view to mutual cooperation against a common danger." The rulers of native states, according to Chirol, with one voice condemned disaffection "with the exception of the Gaekwar of Baroda whose reply without striking any note of substantial dissent is marked by a certain coolness that has won for him the applause of the nationalist press, they respond heartily to the Viceroy's request for suggestions as to the most effective measures to cope with the evil. Most of them put in the very forefront of their recommendations the necessity of checking the licence of the Indian press to which they attribute the main responsibility for the widening of the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. And it should be remembered that the opinions were expressed some months before the Government of India decided to introduce the new Press Act (of 1910). The Nizam (of Hyderabad) holds that newspapers publishing false allegations or exaggerated reports should be officially called upon 'to print formal contradiction or correction as directed'. For in his opinion 'it is no longer safe or desirable to treat with silent contempt any perverse statement which is publicly made because the spread of education on the one hand has created a general interest in the news of the country, and a section of the press, on the other hand, deliberately disseminates news calculated to promote enmity between Europeans and Indians or to excite hatred of government and its officers in ignorant and credulous minds."

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8

THE GANDHIAN REVOLUTION

Mahatma Gandhi's ascendancy in Indian politics and his assumption of the leadership of the national movement for freedom acted as an elixir to Indian journalism. The nationalist press marched shoulder to shoulder with the *Satyagrahis* in the non-violent struggle for freedom. It shared the toil and sweat, the joy and agony, the trials and tribulations and the triumph and tragedy of millions of men and women who responded to the call of the Mahatma and filled the prisons of the British Raj again and again. Like them, it sacrificed its all and refused to bend to the foreign rulers who employed every weapon in their armoury to suppress it and to annihilate it. Many valiant papers died never to rise again, but many died only to rise again and then to die afresh and to be reborn. There were also many who survived the nightmare and the dark night of despair and threat of extinction to share in the joy of freedom when it dawned at last. It was the finest hour of Indian journalism and the golden era of the Indian newspaper. Never before or after independence was there such a tremendous outburst of patriotic fervour and total dedication to the liberation of the motherland. Many are the newspapers and journalists whose names will be written in letters of gold in the history of the freedom movement and many who will be remembered for all times to come for their heroism and sacrifice. In the period between 1919 and 1947, the Indian press was permeated with Gandhi's message and his leadership was unchallenged. It was like an army marching under the command of the liberator.

In the 19th century and the early part of this century, the Indian press moved hand in hand with the people's leaders and it was in the vanguard of the Congress which sought to

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rouse the political consciousness of the people, but then its role was different and its aims were different. The influence of the press was confined to the educated class and it was small in number. There was no mass impact and the leaders were not too eager to cultivate mass appeal. Tilak brought greater realism to Indian politics but the revolution in thought and deed came with the arrival of Gandhi on the political scene. And with him also came a sudden accretion to the strength of the Indian press. There was a spurt in newspapers, especially languages papers in all provinces and they posed a serious challenge to the alien rulers for their tone and action were different from those they had been accustomed to from the Indian press of an earlier period.

What was the miracle that Gandhi performed? K. Rama Rao gave the answer, "Gandhi", he wrote, "gave men of his time an extra dimension to life, a special zest for work. We of the press particularly lived in his reflected effulgence. To the newspapers, he lent prestige and importance as the media of his message, as the vehicles of his inspiration and as the recorders of his operations in the field, as well as of his vital counsels in conference, cabinet and committees. *Young India* (and later *Harijan*) was our holy scripture, inspiring in us idealism, the ambition and glory of complete dedication. It was the day's manna that fed us, the *amrit* that gave us a sense of high purpose and heroic living. Gandhi was a transcendental force—purifying, inspiring, uplifting. We took our journalism seriously. It was more than a vocation; it was a mission and the newspaper was a noble enterprise working for patriotic purposes."

Gandhi took over *Young India* in 1919 from Jamnadas Dwarakadas of Bombay and also started a Gujarati weekly, *Navjivan*. Gandhi described the objects of a newspaper in these words: "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects." He expatiated on this theme while unveiling a portrait of S. Kasturiranga Ayyangar, editor of *The Hindu* in Madras in 1925. He mentioned *The*

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Hindu editor's conception of the role of the journalist. "I never thought Kasturiranga Ayyangar", he said, "was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism, as it appeared to him. He felt that if he was to retain that character, he must not lead the country too much but always accurately reflect its opinion. Those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognise that whenever they saw a change in the editorial policy it was because with an unerring instinct he recognised which way the country was going or which way the wind was blowing. It may be said this was a defect in him but I do not consider it to be so. If he had taken upon himself, as I venture to say I have, the role of a reformer, then he would have to give expression to his own opinion no matter what the whole country thought of it . . . but that is not the peculiar function of a journalist. A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think that Mr. Kasturiranga Ayyangar was almost unrivalled in this quality of his."

As an editor, Gandhi laid down strict standards for himself which was difficult for others to follow. He would not accept advertisements and he believed that a newspaper or journal had to survive on the revenue from subscribers. He would not accept any restrictions on the paper and he would rather close it down than submit to the government's invasion of the liberty of the press. When told that the government was contemplating the suppression of *Young India* and *Navjivan* (Hindi and Gujarati) Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "I hope that the rumour has no foundation. I claim that these three journals are insistently preaching nothing but peace and goodwill. Extraordinary care is taken to give nothing but truth as I find it to the readers. Every inadvertent inaccuracy is admitted and corrected. The circulation of all the weeklies is daily growing. The conductors are voluntary workers, in some cases taking no salary whatsoever and in the case of others receiving mere maintenance money. Profits are all returned to the subscribers in some shape or other or are utilised for some constructive public activity or other. I cannot

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say that I shall not feel a pang if these journals cease to exist. But it is the easiest thing for the government to put them out. The publishers and printers are all friends and co-workers. My contact with them is that the moment the government asks for security, that moment the newspapers must stop. I am conducting them on the assumption that whatever view the government may take of my activities, they at least give me credit for preaching through these newspapers nothing but the purest non-violence and truth according to my lights."

Gandhi was not happy editing an English weekly. He was forced to do it, he wrote, as a concession to the non-Hindi knowing south. "I frankly confess that to me editing a newspaper in English is no pleasure," he wrote in *Young India*. "I feel that in occupying myself with that work I am not making the best use of my time. And but for the Madras Presidency, I should now leave the work of editing *Young India* . . . . The English journals touch but the fringe of India's population . . . . Until Hindustani becomes compulsory in our schools as a second language educated India, especially in the Madras Presidency, must be addressed in English. But I will not be a party to editing a newspaper that does not pay its way unless it has at least 2,500 subscribers (Gandhi mentioned *Young India* had only 1,200 subscribers then). I must appeal to my Tamil friends to see to it that the requisite number of subscribers is found if they wish to see *Young India* continued." *Navjivan*, he said, had 12,000 subscribers and that figure could go up to 20,000 if they could get printers to print that number.

Gandhi's fears about *Young India* proved groundless for its circulation very soon jumped to 45,000 and his articles in it were freely reproduced in the newspapers all over the country. His writings had the widest circulation of any single individual in the country. He believed that dissemination of ideas to the farthest corner of the country was the most important thing and if it was not possible to do so through the printing press, then it should be done through hand written copies. "We must devise methods of circulating our ideas," he wrote. "The press must become fearless, defy consequences and publish

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ideas even when it is in disagreement with them just for the purpose of securing that freedom. An editor with an original idea or an effective prescription for India's ills can easily write them out, a few hundred hands can copy them, many more can read them out to thousands of listeners. I do hope, therefore, that non-cooperation editors at any rate will not refrain from expressing their thoughts for fear of the Press Act. They should regard it as sinful to keep their thoughts secret—a waste of energy to conduct a newspaper that cramps their thoughts. It is negation of one's calling for an editor to have to suppress his best thoughts."

Developing the same theme on another occasion Gandhi wrote: "I believe that an editor who has anything worth saying and who commands a clientele cannot be easily hushed so long as his body is left free. He had delivered his unfinished message as soon as he is put under duress . . . . Let us break the idol of machinery and leaden type. The pen is our foundry and the hands of a willing copyist our printing machine . . . . Let us use the machine and the type while we can to give unfettered expression to our thoughts. But let us not feel helpless when they are taken away from us by a 'paternal government' watching and controlling every combination of types and every movement of the printing machine. But the handwritten newspaper is, I admit, a heroic remedy, meant for heroic times. By being indifferent to the aid of the printing press and the compositor's stick, we ensure their free retention and restoration for all time. We must apply civil disobedience for the restoration of that right before we think of what we call larger things. The restoration of free speech, free association and free press is almost the whole *Swaraj*."

Gandhi was dead opposed to any form of censorship. He said in one case "editors omitted the most telling passages of my speech evidently for fear of the censor". He called the Press Act one of the "blackest laws in the statute book. It has enervated our journalists and the whole country. The journalists have learnt to resort to ambiguous language and viled insinuations in order to escape from the application of this act and the whole country has begun to catch the infection . . . . Our newspapers must not be full of

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99 per cent of useless and only one per cent of good—and that too doubtfully good—material. So let our paper be only of one page but it must contain healthy and clean literature."

Gandhi's style was simple but effective. He used simple words and short sentences to drive his message home. He chose his words with precision and there was no ambiguity or confusion in what he wrote. He opened out his heart and shared his innermost thoughts and feelings with his reader which evoked an emotional response. Millions of people all over the country eagerly waited every week to read in their newspaper what he had written and what his message was for them. He wrote on a variety of topics not confined to politics and he was a diligent correspondent who replied to every letter written to him. His compassion, humility, nobility and his concern for the poorest of the poor breathed through his writings.

When Jawaharlal Nehru's mother, Swarup Rani, was injured in a *lathi*-charge by the police in Allahabad during the *Satyagraha* campaign, Gandhi, who was in prison, remarked to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai: "Lalaji (Lala Lajpat Rai, Punjab Congress leader) was unintentionally beaten by the police; yet how deeply was the country agitated upon hearing the news. Now it is the turn of Jawaharlal's mother and the attack seems to have been deliberate. Still, there seems no righteous indignation being felt in the country. Has not the *Leader* commented on the incident?" Patel told him: "The *Leader* has written about it but without spirit." Gandhi, who had the article read to him, was dissatisfied with it. He commented: "Only this morning we found some journalist describing the *Leader* as a sober newspaper and the title of 'level headed' was conferred on its editor."

Gandhi entered into an argument with the poet Rabindranath Tagore in 1921. Tagore raised his voice against the "mental despotism" which he thought characterised the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. He wrote in the *Modern Review*: "A cause as great as India's should not be dependent on the will of a single master. All the moral forces of the nation must be called upon. Economists must find practical

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solutions, educationists, must teach, statesmen ponder and workers work. No pressure either open or hidden must weigh on the intelligence." Gandhi wrote in *Young India*: "While I agree with all that the poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today. I have again and again appealed to reason. True to his practical instinct, the poet lives for the morrow and would have us to do likewise. He presents to our endearing gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar in the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings, in whose veins new blood had flowed during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching the birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realised. I have found it impossible to soothe the suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—the invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it themselves. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow."

Gandhi was prosecuted for sedition in March, 1922, on the basis of three articles which he wrote at intervals in *Young India*. Charged with him was Shankarlal Banker, publisher of *Young India*. The first article, written in September, 1921, was titled "Tampering with loyalty". In it Gandhi openly declared that his task was to encourage sedition and to accept the consequences. The second article, "A puzzle and its solution", was published in December. In this, Gandhi stated the case for subversion with the utmost simplicity. "We want to overthrow the government", he wrote, "we want to compel its submission to the people's will." The third article, which was the most vehement attack on the government, appeared in February, 1922, and was captioned, "Shaking the manes". Gandhi pleaded guilty and Judge Broomfield sentenced him to six year's imprisonment quoting the analogy of Tilak's sentence on the same charge.

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When Syed Hussain, editor of *Independent*, (started by Pandit Motilal Nehru) Allahabad, asked for a message on the inauguration of the newspaper on February 9, 1919, Gandhi sent him the following: "In wishing you success I would like to say how I hope your writings would be worthy of the title you have chosen for your journal; and may I further hope that to a robust independence you will add an equal measure of self-restraint and the strictest adherence to truth. Too often in our journals, as in others do we get fiction instead of fact and declamation in place of sober reasoning. You would make the *Independent* a power in the land and a means of education for the people by avoiding the errors I have drawn attention to."

Mahadev Desai who mentions this in a book on Gandhi adds: "It was found afterwards that the editor could not muster up sufficient courage to publish the message." Gandhi, however, came to the rescue of the *Independent* when it passed through a financial crisis in 1921. M.R. Jayakar has mentioned in his autobiography that he gave Gandhi a cheque for Rs. 25,000 in 1921 for popularising *khadi*. Jayakar wrote that a week later Motilal Nehru came to his residence and told him that if he (Jayakar) had no objection, Gandhi would like to use Jayakar's donation to relieve the financial difficulties of the *Independent*, Motilal's newspaper. "I was surprised at the request," Jayakar, said, "but not knowing how deep the financial chasm of the *Independent* was, I replied that I had given the amount as a gift to Gandhi expressing no doubt my preference. As it was a free gift, I left it to Gandhi to decide what use to make of that donation. I learnt much later that the entire amount was swallowed up in the hungry jaws of that impecunious newspaper."

Gandhi exercised tremendous influence on the Indian press and as we shall see in the next chapter, he entered into argument with the editors on several occasions, either personally or through the columns of his journals. The variety of subjects he dealt with provoked public discussion and as he always followed an unusual course, the arguments were of perennial interest. As was remarked by a writer: "As a result

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of his wide interest, his genius for simplification, his eagerness to reach the largest number of people and the startling nature of his activities, there was a quickening of life in journalism. Many of his followers were moved to write and publish in English and Indian languages. Regional journalism began to grow and there was hardly an area of the country which did not have its newspaper." Almost all the top leaders of the Congress at the national and state levels had their own newspapers propagating their views and those of the party. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru told the Press Laws Committee in 1921 that the bulk of the Indian press was pro-Gandhi and pro-non-cooperation movement. Editors from Bengal spoke of the loss in circulation of non-Gandhian papers. Anglo-Indian newspapers also began to lose ground and the *Pioneer* of Allahabad was the first to change into Indian hands in 1933 when the U.P. landowners bought it. *The Englishman*, long time foe of Indians and Indian nationalism merged in the *Statesman*. The *Times of India* and the *Madras Mail* began to employ Indian sub-editors on their staff in 1924 and the *Statesman* followed suit much later.

In the pages of *Young India* and *Harijan*, Gandhi described "the India of my dreams". In the words of a foreign writer: "From time to time there would be subtle changes, sudden alteration of emphasis, a shift of focus. He was like a painter who returns again and again to the canvas, adding some colour here, changing some outline there, never quite satisfied with the portrayal of his beloved. But these improvisations were merely the inevitable consequence of long pondering for the essential design remained unchanged." Gandhi wrote in *Young India* in 1931: "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which will be no high class or low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army

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imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interest of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. This is the India of my dream."

Young India had a chequered career, subject to stoppages and revival according to the vicissitudes of the political situation. Gandhi asked some of his lieutenants to edit the paper when he was in prison and they included C. Rajagopalachari and Pothan Joseph.

Gandhi was a born journalist and writing was in his blood. In 1932 even while he was in prison, he started the *Harijan* which was intended to promote his campaign against untouchability and for temple entry for the untouchables whom he called "Harijans" (children of God). But *Harijan* soon became the Bible of Congressmen and the masses who were led by him. It became the biggest news source for the newspapers and every Saturday news agencies, Indian and foreign, competed with one another in flashing Gandhi's articles to the newsrooms of the press in India and abroad. And every week Gandhi had something important to say and what he wrote became front page stories. He wrote while travelling third class in trains and whenever he could steal time in the midst of his heavy engagements. He was keenly conscious of the deadline and never missed one. He did not spare his closest relatives or friends if they invited his criticism. An example is Rajagopalachari whom in one article he praised to the skies and in another, was highly critical. In 1942, when C.R. differed from Gandhi and the Congress on the Quit India resolution and advocated partition of the country as demanded by the Muslim League if that became inevitable, Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan*: "I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan nor do the nationalist Muslims. . . . . I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. . . . Rajaji's method leads us to the blind alley unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us." Calling his plan "unnatural", Gandhi wrote: "There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated

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him from his colleagues . . . . He wants to thrust himself on the British power which does not want him. . . . In order to thrust himself on the British he gives the League the right of self-determination. . . . "

Writing in the *Harijan* in 1936, Gandhi spoke of a clique against C.R. in Madras. "It is a clique", he said, "that evidently counts in the official Congress in Madras. But the masses are devoted to Rajaji. I am neither vain nor foolish enough to feel that I could have had the huge public demonstrations all along the route of the pilgrimage if he had no influence with the masses in Tamil Nadu. . . . I would be less than loyal to the organisation if I did not warn them (Congressmen) against losing the valuable services which no one can shoulder as Rajaji can at the present moment."

Between 1920 and 1946, Gandhi organised three major campaigns against the alien government and the biggest, grandest and the most non-violent was his Salt *Satyagraha* which he launched in 1930. It was in this that the nationalist press played a memorable role which perhaps is unique in the history of any freedom movement. The battle for liberty of the press which began in 1920 went on as long as the political struggle lasted, gaining in intensity in 1930 with the intensity of the civil disobedience movement, in 1942, when the final struggle was launched, saw its climax. The government came down heavily on the press in 1930 when a Press Ordinance was issued, reviving the provisions of the Press Act of 1910. By July, 1930, over 130 papers had been called upon to pay heavy securities and nine had to suspend publication. The government, it was estimated, collected Rs. 2,50,000 as deposits. There were many cases where deposits were forfeited as fast as they were deposited, the demand going up with every fresh security. The *Free Press Journal* alone, must have paid many thousands to satisfy repeated demands and it held on to the flag to the bitter end. Another heroic journal was the *National Herald* of Lucknow, started by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1938, which faced the government's wrath during World War II. The *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Hindustan Times* were among other newspapers which suffered but bravely carried on

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the fight for freedom. There were many courageous fighters in the language press, many of whom perished in the battle and many survived to write a fresh chapter in the glorious history of the Indian press. By August 1942, the government had suppressed 92 journals.

Among the English newspapers of this period was the *Swarajya* of Madras, founded by T. Prakasam who was called Andhra Kesari by his compatriots. Founded in Madras in 1922, it barely managed to exist for 12 long years. It was a battle for survival, a heroic struggle for existence and a patriotic effort to gather the forces of freedom fighters under the leadership of Gandhi. Although ultimately, *Swarajya* fell on the roadside owing to lack of finance, it succeeded in producing a fine and noble team of journalists and writers who saturated with its idealism carried its message to the papers they later served. As a historian has put it: "The *Swarajya's* fate was not shared by less distinguished papers started at the time. They swept the field free of most rivals which had no advertising to fall back on; they shook the hold of the Anglo-Indian press which survived the storm only because it had the backing of the government and the business houses. But they were unable to build themselves solidly on the ground they had made peculiarly their own. They stood for concerted political journalism and they subordinated journalism to politics. They recruited staff somewhat in the manner of the Congress collecting volunteers and they utilised the national enthusiasm for securing low paid staff."

One of the earliest editors of *Swarajya*, K.M. Panikkar, has described his experiences in the paper. "The life of an editor in the India of those days", he has written, "was not only difficult but very uncertain. The hostility of the people in power, the needless wrangles, the lack of alternative employment, financial strain, were all endemic to a life of journalism. I had to undergo all these trials." Panikkar carried on a relentless battle against the Justice Party in Madras which was in power under the leadership of the Raja of Panagal. His effort was to draw the non-Brahmins to the side of the nationalists and weaken the Panagal Ministry. He also mounted

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an attack on the Governor Lord Wellingdon and his administration. The *Swarajya* published several letters of the governor to allege that there was some dubious deal between him and a local jeweller. "The directors of the paper were alarmed", Panikkar said. "They were afraid that an attack on the governor might precipitate disaster. Anyway, I resigned the editorship the following day. This was in February, 1924."

Earlier, Panikkar had successfully carried on a campaign against a proposal to send temple dancing girls (*devadasis*) to the Imperial Exhibition at Wembley as an attraction for the Indian pavilion. He published interviews with leading dancers of Madras who vigorously protested against the insult of their community which the proposal involved. The help of social reformers who were opposed to dancing even as an art, was secured and for nearly a fortnight *Swarajya* filled its columns with protests against the proposal which was finally dropped.

K. Rama Rao, who was editor of *Swarajya* for 100 days in 1934, has written of the deplorable condition of the paper which was putting up a brave fight against odds. "The large amount of money required for running a daily newspaper could not be found. There was not a single trained man on the staff which was made up of unpaid apprentices. The machinery was old; it was difficult to get sufficient matter composed in time. We had to wait for the metal of the earlier formes to be melted down before we started composing for the late formes. Eighteen lakhs of good rupees had gone down the drain before the *Swarajya* finally went out of existence. Prakasam impoverished himself in the public cause; all his earnings as a barrister went to support a paper that refused to live. *Swarajya*, however, lives in the history of Indian journalism for the good work it did and for the large number of good journalists it nurtured, and remains a fragrant memory to those who exulted in its sturdy, fearless, almost reckless patriotism When it came out in 1922, it satisfied a great need for a newspaper in the south that would give all out support to the Congress; it achieved phenomenal popularity from the very first day. But a succession of bad managers

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undid the dedicated work of the editorial staff. But in spite of their frightful experience of perpetual privation, those who worked on it remember with nostalgic sadness their old chief and their old paper. They remember it as they would a seminary of learning or a temple of worship where life is hard but is inspired by a sense of high purpose."

Another famous journalist, Khasa Subba Rao, who also served in the *Swarajya*, wrote: "Sri Prakasam lacked business talent and was continually getting into debt and difficulty. But he had a stout and optimistic heart which delighted in easy solutions for every oncoming crisis. He solved difficulties by appointing a man to take charge of them. My good friend, Krupanidhi, who was then the most important man in the office after Prakasam, was taught by experience to receive these announcements with scepticism. We were at the time serious journalists fanatically given to the Mahatma's non-cooperation movement. Any idea of relaxation in the anti-imperialist effort was abhorrent to our sense of duty. It was difficult to imagine Prakasam without *Swarajya* and *Swarajya* without Prakasam. But *Swarajya* meant not only the Andhra Kesari but also scores of journalists who imbibed the same spirit. They endured penury to be true to their conscience and to serve the country."

Among the Indian newspapers of the pre-independence period, the *National Herald* of Lucknow suffered most from government oppression and persecution. Founded by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1938 as an English daily, it had never a moment of peace and its life was one of struggle with the government and for its own existence. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought it into unceasing conflict with the provincial government which was out to destroy it. In August, 1940, the U.P. Government directed the paper to submit all posters and headlines relating to war news to the secretary of the Information Department of the government before publication. The *Herald's* protest that headlines went with news reports from news agencies and that it would be impossible to submit them for pre-censorship since they were written in the early hours of the morning when no censor or government official could

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be got at was not heeded. The *Herald* was forced to publish war news without headlines.

In October, the government imposed a censorship on editorials relating to war effort and the *Herald* decided to appear without editorials. They were, however, resumed following an understanding in Delhi between the government and the newspaper editors but within a fortnight the U.P. Government demanded a security of Rs. 6,000 in respect of three editorials. The security was forfeited within a short time and a fresh security of Rs. 12,000 was demanded. In a signed editorial, Nehru said the decision had been taken to furnish the security so that the paper might continue publication. An appeal for public contributions evoked an overwhelming response and in the words of a member of the staff, "Money came in sacks till we lost count of it." The launching of individual civil disobedience movement in 1941 brought fresh trouble to the paper. Its editor was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for publishing a report of a lathi-charge in Lucknow jail.

Fresh restrictions were placed on the *Herald* during the Quit India movement in 1942. The paper ceased publication after the police raided its premises and seized the printing press and office. The *Herald* did not resume till 1945 when the premises and the press were returned. When its financial difficulties were acute and seemed insurmountable, the editorial and managerial staff offered to run the paper with the support of press workers for three months without pay. The offer was gratefully accepted and the *Herald* turned the corner within the next three months.

"The *Herald* achieved a standing in the newspaper world which was truly exceptional for a provincial paper", one of its editors has written. "It was far better known abroad than many of its longer established contemporaries. Mainly it was because whether officially so recognised or not, it was the paper of the Congress. Nehru was its head and it spoke for the Congress in U.P., the biggest and politically the most important province of India. It earned the praise of friend and foe

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alike for the way it spoke and it spoke in scorn of consequences. It said things which needed to be said; its warnings were heeded with respect and fear by those to whom they were addressed. It fought tyranny at home and abroad. It was *par excellence* the paper of liberation. It held aloft through good times and evil, the banner of the nation when every effort was being made to haul it down. It raised its prestige and earned the nation's goodwill with every blow it gave and received, by every wound it inflicted and suffered, by every risk it took audaciously, and by every danger it survived miraculously."

Nehru wrote in the *Herald* as often as he found time, both in his name and anonymously in the editorial columns. He said more than once that he disagreed with the views expressed in the *Herald* occasionally but he was satisfied that the editor and his colleagues were on the whole faithfully representing the Congress point of view. He made it clear early that the editor had the freedom to write what he thought best within the framework of the general policy of the Congress and he also saw to it that others did not meddle in editorial affairs. He was very considerate and rarely criticised anything written in the editorial columns. Two editors of the *Herald*, K. Rama Rao, and Chelapathi Rau were giants in their profession and we shall have more to say about them in another chapter.

Another nationalist newspaper which was a victim of government persecution and repressive policy was the *Hindustan Times* of Delhi. The paper was started in 1923 by some Sikhs as an offshoot of the Akali movement and it was the first Indian daily in the capital. K.M. Panikkar was its first editor. It was not easy to publish an English newspaper in north India in those days. Panikkar wrote: "Delhi had few compositors who could cope with English types nor press foremen who could manage a large press." Panikkar had two able assistants, G.S. Raghavan and Ambadi Krishna Menon who made his task of running the paper lighter. Referring to Raghavan, he wrote: "There was little in the field of journalism that he did not know. He was competent in every department from composing type to writing leading articles." Of Ambadi

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Krishna Menon he said: "I have rarely seen such a spotless character, so unselfish and utterly devoted."

The *Hindustan Times* was inaugurated by Gandhi and the first issue contained articles by Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahomed Ali. Because it was the only English newspaper in the capital, it attracted wide notice from the beginning. Panikkar said: "With the support of K.C. Roy of the Associated Press of India, I was able to establish high standards of journalism in the *Hindustan Times*."

Panikkar's editorship was notable for a controversy over affairs in Travancore, a princely state, in which the paper was involved. The state at that time was being ruled by a regent, Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai and reports were received from the paper's correspondent that the British Resident, C.H.C. Cotton, was interfering in the administration and was unpopular. Panikkar describing the episode wrote: "After making further enquiries and ascertaining facts I published the reports in the *Hindustan Times* under the caption: 'Cotton epidemic in Travancore'. This touched off a storm in Travancore. The government issued a formal denial of the statements in our reports but the truth could not be concealed... . Cotton wanted to stop my attacks and persuaded some Nair officials who were friends of my uncle to influence him. When my uncle spoke to me to the effect that it would be unwise to attack the Government of Travancore and suggested that I should leave newspaper work and return home to manage family affairs, I could see Cotton's hand even there. I pacified my uncle by agreeing to resign my editorship in six months' time and come away." But his resignation, however, came in another way.

The Sikhs were not happy with the paper and they sold it to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Congress leader. Malaviya took over the management along with Lala Lajpat Rai and on the Board of Directors were also M.R. Jayakar and Raja Narendranath. Soon differences cropped up between Panikkar and Malaviya, and Panikkar handed in his resignation. His charge was that Malaviya was converting the paper into a communal mounthpiece whereas it had already achieved

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a reputation as a political newspaper. The paper passed into the hands of G.D. Birla in 1927 and from then on it was conducted on a sound financial base.

The *Hindustan Times*, like other nationalist newspapers, suffered during the various *Satyagraha* movements for supporting the Congress and it put up a brave fight against the restrictions imposed by the government and the harassment it was subjected to. It was one of the leading newspapers which gave news of the *Satyagraha* campaigns in bold type on its front pages to the maximum extent, an honour it shared with the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Free Press Journal*. When the chief commissioner of Delhi issued an order in 1942 following the Quit India disturbances directing the *Hindustan Times* not to publish more than three columns of news about the disturbances, the editor, Devadas Gandhi, defied it and was arrested and sentenced to a prison term. "This is an order", *The Hindu* commented, "that simply takes our breath away. It demonstrates the fact that the chief commissioner is as innocent as a new-born baby of the very elements of newspaper production. By insisting that no paper shall publish more than three columns of the present disturbances the chief commissioner makes it impossible for them to fulfil their duty to the public which is to give it all the news which in their judgment is fit to print."

The *Hindustan Times* has had a great galaxy of able editors besides Devadas Gandhi, including K. Rama Rao, K. Santhanam, Durga Prasad and J.N. Sahni. But its greatest asset was cartoonist Shankar who achieved international fame. The greatest in the land, officials and non-officials, were his fans and one of them was the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. Linlithgow had frequent talks with the editor, Devadas Gandhi but he was more interested in Shankar. When Shankar left for Britain on a study tour, Linlithgow gave an introductory letter to the Marquis of Zetland, a former secretary of state for India. "Shankar is, I would judge," he wrote, "of quite unusual quality; he is witty, has great fertility of imagination, a keen sense of humour, is never in bad taste and on the technical side is very quick at catching a likeness. Personally

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he is a charming little man with excellent manners." Shankar's cartoons of the viceroy were often bitingly critical but they were always enjoyed by the victim. On one occasion Shankar portrayed him with two enormous chins. Linlithgow had a personal message sent to him pointing out that he had three chins, not two. Mentioning this incident his biographer says: "That the shape of his face was the result of polio was irrelevant for this least vain of men."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel came to Shankar's rescue in March, 1947, when the then Viceroy, Lord Wavell, objected to a cartoon in the *Hindustan Times* on the Punjab disturbances and said it was actionable under the Press Ordinance. The viceroy wrote to Patel, who was the home member in the Interim Government : "I realise the depth of feeling that has been aroused by the communal disturbances but I think you should look into the question whether action should be taken against the *Hindustan Times*." In his reply, Patel agreed that the cartoon was open to objection but he did not think it was actionable under the Ordinance which was limited to anything likely to promote communal hatred. It would be impossible to establish that the cartoon has this effect."

Among the papers which played a significant role in the freedom struggle must be included the *Searchlight* of Patna with which Rajendra Prasad was associated. The *Searchlight* was started as a bi-weekly in 1918 by Sachchidananda Sinha and Hasan Imam. When the non-cooperation movement was launched in 1920, there were serious differences of opinion among its sponsors as to the attitude the paper should adopt to the movement. While Sinha and Imam were opposed to the movement, the paper's Editor, Murli Manohar Prasad and Rajendra Prasad supported it. "There was so much enthusiasm for the movement," Rajendra Prasad recalled in his autobiography, "that the paper could have opposed it only at the cost of its popularity. We decided that the paper should not editorially support the movement, but publish objective reports without taking sides on the issue. It was also decided that it should publish signed articles expounding both points of view." However, Sinha and Imam, who had built up the

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paper with their money and hard work, in the words of Rajendra Prasad, "magnanimously handed over the paper to us and severed their connection with it." Thereafter, the *Searchlight* became a full-fledged Congress daily. When during the *Satyagraha* movement in 1930, the Congress decided that such of the papers as were unable to publish factual news and express their views fearlessly should suspend publication rather than submit to government orders, the *Searchlight* was one of the few papers to abide by the directive. When it resumed publication, it was plagued by financial difficulties and in 1941 it was handed over to the Birlas on condition that the editorial policy was not changed. During the 1942 disturbances, the Government suppressed the paper and arrested its editor. It however, resumed publication later.

In Bengal, the Congress leader, Chittaranjan Das, started an English daily, *Forward*, in Calcutta in 1923. Motilal Nehru and Sarat Chandra Bose were on the Board of Directors. Das had been closely associated with B.C. Pal and also with Annie Besant's *New India* in which he voiced his views. Das disagreed with Gandhi's policy of non-cooperation and campaigned for entry into the legislatures to break the Constitution. He and Motilal Nehru were the architects of the Swaraj Party which captured the provincial legislatures and created problems for the alien rulers. According to one writer: "*Forward* established new standards in Indian journalism and had great influence on public opinion." Leading articles were written under the personal direction of Das. "The paper's fair and free criticism attracted the attention of the government and the people alike", says the writer we have quoted above. "Its wide range of interests and its bold and fair presentation of its views soon made it a power in the land." After the death of Das, his disciple J.M. Sen Gupta took over the *Forward* but after 1928, when differences between Sen Gupta and Subhas Chandra Bose, both lieutenants of Das, became acute, he left it to start another paper, *Advance*, in 1929. Subhas Bose and his followers renamed *Forward*, as *Liberty* and there was a regular wordy warfare between the rival newspapers as the Sen Gupta-Bose differences became more acrimonious.

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Calcutta also was the home of the *Hindustan Standard*, started by the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* group in 1937, which was a fearless champion of the national cause and played a notable role in carrying the message of Gandhi and the Congress to people far and wide. An equally fearless paper under a dynamic editor was the *Sind Observer* published from Karachi. Founded in 1919, its editor was K. Punnaiah, one of the well-known names in Indian journalism.

The Gandhian era produced some outstanding journalists as we have mentioned already. We shall notice some in this chapter and in another reserved for the giants.

Some of India's greatest journalists have come from Andhra Pradesh and one of them was Khasa Subba Rao who was a freedom fighter and served on many newspapers like *Swarajya*, *Free Press Journal* and the *Indian Express*. He was a firebrand and his editorials were emotional and touched the heart of the reader. He did not mince words and had scant respect for the law of sedition which involved the paper he served with a head-on collision with the alien rulers, resulting in financial loss from frequent forfeiture of securities. He became a liability and switched from paper to paper. He made great sacrifices in the freedom struggle and was severely beaten by the police in Madras during the Salt *Satyagraha*. After independence, he started a weekly, *Swatantra* and later became the editor of another weekly, *Swarajya* with which C. Rajagopalachari was associated. Of him an admirer has written: "Khasa Subba Rao brought to journalism an austerity, a high sense of purpose, a religious zeal, to serve the public, to instruct it to save its soul from impending perdition born of ignorance. He had a dauntless mind, a hopeful heart, an invincible faith. He was, in fact, not so much a journalist as a crusader with a pen. He argued his causes, which were many, in chaste prose and with lucid logic. Like all people with a mission, he often contradicted himself. No one can predict what he would say next about the same subject or about the same person. But no one dare challenge the honesty of his motive or the genuineness of the moment's conviction. He was never afraid of changing his opinions if circumstances required

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him to do so. In equal measure, he doled out idolatry and iconoclasm. His journalism had one supreme distinction: he made many friends and few enemies in spite of his passion for controversy."

When Subba Rao passed away in June 1961, Rajaji said in a tribute: "The world of journalism in India has lost one of its bravest and best veterans... . I have lost one who bathed me with his affection and rejuvenated me when I felt weary. He was beloved of all because he overflowed with love and forgiveness for all. He was, every moment of his life, an example and a demonstration of complete surrender to the divine ruler.... In this he was a monitor for me."

Unlike Subba Rao in every respect was K. Santhanam, Congress leader, who was equally well-known as a journalist. Santhanam who was editor of the *Indian Express* in 1932 and later of the *Hindustan Times*, had an analytical mind and was able to write in simple style about the most obtuse subject. Many still remember the series of articles he wrote in the *Indian Express* on socialism for the common man and of the Congress philosophy which he explained in terms which even a child could understand. Like Subba Rao, he also made sacrifices in the freedom struggle and went to prison many times. He was more and more involved in the political battle and when freedom came, he had to shoulder the responsibility of office and the journalist in him became a casualty.

J.N. Sahni was another freedom fighter who was also a professional journalist. He got his M.A. degree in journalism from Michigan University, U.S.A. He joined the *Hindustan Times* as editor in 1926 and held the post until 1933 when he resigned and started his own paper, *National Call*. The *National Call*, which was published both in the morning and evening, was the first newspaper in the capital to sell at one anna (six paise) a copy. The *National Call* was one of the nationalist newspapers which played a prominent role during the *Satyagraha* and Quit India movements, braving the wrath of the Government by displaying *Satyagraha* news in banner headlines. Like many nationalist papers of this period the *National Call* also faced financial difficulties and it survived only, till independence.

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Totally different from the editors we have described was Pothan Joseph, a brilliant journalist who lived for the profession and his craft and served whichever paper needed his services and whoever paid him well. He was like a rolling stone and moved on from one paper to another, regardless of its political affiliation or policy and trimmed his sails according to the prevailing wind. He could write on any subject and about any public man and he was a man of wit and humour. He became well-known for his column "Over a cup of tea" which he used to poke fun at politicians and administrators and expose their foibles. He carried this column with him to whichever paper he served and hundreds of people bought the paper just to read that column. Among the papers he served were the *Indian Daily Mail*, *Indian Express*, the *Hindustan Times*, and *Dawn*, which was Jinnah's mouthpiece and was published from Delhi. The last paper he edited was the *Deccan Herald* of Bangalore which he joined in 1948 and left in 1958.

Deccan Herald is today one of the well-known and stable regional newspapers. It has many rivals in Bangalore where it was started in 1948 with the support and active assistance of the then Dewan of Mysore, Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar. Three of India's national dailies, *The Hindu*, the *Indian Express* and the *Times of India* compete with the *Deccan Herald* but it is leading them all in Karnataka. It had a shaky start and passed through a time of stress and strain. Its founders, K. Venkataswami and K.N. Guruswami who floated a company, even had to close the *Herald* and its sister Kannada daily, *Prajavani* for some time. However, Guruswami who took over the management of the papers, tided over the crises and put them on a sound footing. Among its editors after Pothan Joseph was V.K. Narasimhan.

Rusi Karanjia is a veteran journalist who is still going strong in Bombay with his *Blitz*, a news weekly which he started in 1941. He was a special correspondent of the *Times of India* before he launched *Blitz*, one of the earliest news magazines in India. Karanjia is now also editor of a daily, called *Daily*.

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A rival to *Blitz* was *Current* started by D.F. Karaka, which however, he sold for financial reasons. The *Current*, a weekly, is now being published by a new management and a new editor.

In the annals of Indian journalism the name of C.Y. Chintamani will have an important place as a journalist of integrity and outstanding ability. He mixed politics and journalism with great success and he maintained his position as a front rank journalist in the face of odds, in the face of overwhelming support from fellow journalists to the Gandhian ideology which he stoutly opposed. He was an outstanding politician, becoming a minister in the United Provinces (as it was then called) for a brief period, as he was an outstanding editor. He built up the *Leader* of Allahabad as the best Moderate newspaper in India. He belonged to the old school of politicians whom Gandhi replaced and he was a leading light of the National Liberal Federation which was the name assumed by the Moderates after they seceded from the Congress in 1919. J.T. Gwynn wrote of him: "When you meet him you are struck by his energy and bluntness and his honesty and ability are everywhere acknowledged." P.N. Sapru paid him this tribute: "His knowledge of man and affairs was of an encyclopaedic character and there could be no doubt as to his integrity of purpose and the high conception of his mission as a journalist. He always looked upon journalism as a vocation. Throughout his life he maintained the high traditions of that profession."

It was the proud boast of Chintamani that he was an impeccable proof-reader. It was a capital offence in his opinion for a journalist not to be a competent proof-reader. He did not believe in water-tight compartments in a newspaper office. He asked sub-editors to report and reporters to edit. He required every sub-editor to write a weekly feature, not necessarily for publication but it was a good exercise in the art and technique of writing.

"As a writer, Chintamani had a hard hitting style", a biographer has written. "Persuasion was not his forte. A strenuous study of public affairs, helped by a formidable

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memory enabled him to write with mastery on local and national questions. He would often walk late at night into the subs' room and dictate to one of them an editorial for the morning. When he wrote, it was with a steady hand; he drew no distinction between his professional and public work. The *Leader* was just a reflection of himself."

Jawaharlal Nehru was not fond of the *Leader* as he was not of the Moderates. He castigated the Moderates in 1930 as behaving like old women—weeping and howling and feeling terribly oppressed about everything. "The *Leader* is evidently among the weeping widows", he said, "if they have not got gumption enough to do anything, why do they not shut up?"

In any history of Indian journalism, P.W. Wilson, the Englishman who sacrificed his career for love of India and the nationalist cause will find an honourable place. Wilson was appointed editor of *Pioneer*, Lucknow, in 1928 when it was still under European management, and losing heavily. He changed radically the policy of the paper with the approval of the proprietors in London who hoped that it might give the paper a new life. Wilson reduced the price of the paper to one anna as an added bait. He had the reputation of being one of the most brilliant among the younger men of Fleet Street. He was a live wire journalist and although he was new to India and not well versed in Indian politics he soon equipped himself by careful study and cultivation of valuable contacts and talking to large numbers of knowledgeable people. He was fond of Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a red rag to the British rulers, and asked him to review a book written by Catherine Mayo. He published the review on the front page of his paper and this got him into trouble with the management. His pro-Indian policy lost for the paper its old readership amidst protests from angry colonels and majors. On one occasion, Wilson attacked the commander-in-chief for lack of a "progressive army policy" and an angry colonel wired to him: "Who the devil are you to do that ?" "The very legitimate right", Wilson replied, "that the writer too was among those who had bared their chests to enemy bullets in in the World War."

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Wilson appointed Indians to the editorial staff and, as he said: "brought the right outlook to the paper." His handling of the major political questions in a bold and sympathetic way enlarged the circle of his readership and he became popular in U.P. He wielded a powerful pen and wrote vigorous editorials and people began to say that the *Pioneer* was more progressive than Chintamani's *Leader*. He was a first rate newsman. He collected good news stories and wrote them attractively himself. It was said of him that he indulged in personalities and made enemies easily. He lacked sound judgment and the paper was involved in libel and contempt of court cases. He was dismissed by the management on the ground that he was "incapable of discharging the responsibilities of an editor."

Wilson covered the first Indian Round Table Conference in London in 1930 for his paper and also for *The Hindu*. After leaving the *Pioneer*, Wilson went to Bombay and joined the *Indian Daily Mail*. His column, 'Heard at Apollo Bunder', written under the pseudonym Scrutator contained lively news items from Bombay and other parts of India obtained from high quarters and written in a racy style. The *Indian Daily Mail* closed down in 1931 and Wilson returned home a broken man. The British Union of Journalists had put him on the black list for his advocacy of the Indian cause. A talented editor and good friend of India he died a poor, neglected and wretched man.

An increasing use of modern machinery marked the development of the Indian press in the Gandhian era. The rotary was replacing the flat bed for printing newspapers and the more prosperous newspapers were expanding their press and equipping them for better production and increased circulation. The *Times of India* in Bombay and the *Statesman* in Calcutta were pioneers in this and the more prosperous Indian-owned papers like *The Hindu* followed their example. But the Indian-owned newspapers were generally shoddily printed; the body type was broken and the headings were like teeth with gaps. Some letters being older than most went down and did not take ink. The art work, what there was of it, consisted

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of ready blocks of leaders. According to one observer; "A large number of newspapers were shoestring affairs. The nationalist ones were more so, living in constant fear of raids on the press and forfeiture of deposits. Risk was high and investment low." The same observer adds: "In the old days, many of the editorial writers were formidable grammarians and stylists but the news columns did not always reflect a feel for language, even literacy."

Jawaharlal Nehru made this comment on Indian-owned newspapers: "Their financial resources are limited and there is little attempt on the part of owners to improve them. They carry on their day-to-day life with difficulty and the unhappy editorial staff has no easy time. Their get-up is poor, their advertisements often of the most objectionable kind and their general attitude to life and politics sentimental and hysterical." He, however, made an exception of *The Hindu* which he said was free from all this and enjoyed stability and success.

Another historian of these times wrote: "In spite of the innumerable limitations imposed on it by repressive laws, hostile officialdom, poor finance, lack of sufficient technical skill and trainee manpower, the performance of the India press has been of a high standard. Its chief title to fame and gratitude has been the splendid part it played in the freedom struggle. Its past has been glorious indeed. Nothing but passionate love of work and the urge for public service could have kept Indian journalism going. Public spirited proprietors were piling up losses and the workers were finding it difficult to raid the room of the owner who himself was in desperate financial straits and who often worked harder and longer than they. Salaries were low and uncertain; for months together little happened in that direction. Ten to twelve hours a day were not unusual for sub-editors and reporters till as late as 1939. The staff was limited and leave was difficult to get."

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CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT

The Second World War years culminating in the Quit India movement and the 1942 disturbance saw the nationalist press going through a period of acute stress and strain when it fought hard for mere survival and the odds were against it. It found itself in a desperate situation in which, on the one hand, it had to function under severe restrictions imposed on it by the alien Government and, on the other had to discharge its duty to the people and the nation, which under the leadership of Gandhi was making one last and final attempt to free itself from foreign yoke. It was difficult to imagine that the Indian press would have survived the ordeal if the occasion had not produced a leader of the calibre of Kasturi Srinivasan, managing editor of *The Hindu*, who acting as the spokesman of the Indian press, negotiated with the government and tried to soften the rigours of the Government onslaught on the nationalist press. His efforts were not entirely successful and even he was led, at one time, to organise a black-out of government news and speeches in the Indian press in protest against their attitude. Not all the nationalist papers and Gandhi himself were satisfied with his work and accused him of letting down the national cause. But all without exception recognised his sincerity and integrity and his keen desire to make it possible for the press to live under the most dire circumstances.

When World War II broke out in September, 1939, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, announced that India was at war and sought the cooperation of all parties in the war effort. The Congress demanded a declaration of British war aims, especially about India's constitutional future. The nationalist press supported the Congress demand and said that Indo-British relations would improve and there would be greater

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enthusiasm for the war effort if India's independence was recognised. The newspapers representing the Moderates questioned the wisdom of raising the constitutional issue at a time of grave crisis for Britain and advocated cooperation in the war effort. They believed that freedom would come at the end of the war by the mere force of events. The Anglo-Indian press with some exceptions, was sympathetic to the demand for declaration of war aims but they urged Hindu-Muslim unity as a preliminary to constitutional changes.

Linlithgow was not favourably disposed to the Congress demand. He wrote to the Secretary of State, L.S. Amery, after the fall of Singapore: "I am carrying here almost single-handed an immense responsibility. Indeed, I do not think I exaggerate to affirm that the key to success in this war is very largely in my hands." Linlithgow thought the grant of political concessions would imperil the present and the future. There was no possibility of giving satisfaction to the Congress leaders, he said, and he described them as "entirely ruthless politicians." "India is hopelessly and, I suspect, irremediably", he wrote, "split by racial and religious divisions which we cannot bridge and which become more and more acute as any real transfer of power by us draws nearer." He concluded that since India was so vital to the success of the Allies he would rather face such troubles as might arise from a continuation of the status quo "than those that might arise as a result of making concessions which are ill-advised and dangerous and on which we might have to go back for reasons of imperial security."

Soon after India was declared at war, the Government of India appointed a chief press adviser and chose Desmond Young, formerly editor of the *Pioneer*, for the post. It was the time when the Congress Ministries in the various provinces had resigned in protest against the declaration of war without the consent of the people's representatives and Gandhi had launched his individual *Satyagraha* movement to oppose the war effort. The Government of India issued an order under the Defence of India Rules without consulting the chief press adviser, prohibiting the printing and publishing of any matter

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"calculated directly or indirectly to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion or any matter relating to the holding of meetings or the making of speeches for the purpose directly or indirectly of fomenting opposition to the aforesaid."

The Indian press protested against the order and said they had already accepted and honoured the principle of consultation in regard to publication of news items that might affect the war effort. A delegation on behalf of the Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society met the Home Member, Sir Reginald Maxwell, and was told that the order had been issued only to prevent the "exploitation of newspapers" for anti-war propaganda. The arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru at this juncture posed a problem to the newspapers of how much prominence could be given to it in the news columns and made it a live issue.

Editors of Indian newspapers decided to meet in Delhi to consider the situation and thus was born the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference in November 1940 which was to play a vital role during the war years as the spokesman of the press in the confrontation with the Government. Kasturi Srinivasan, managing editor of *The Hindu*, was unanimously elected president of the conference and his election was welcomed both by the government and Gandhi. Srinivasan told his fellow editors that no self-respecting editor could submit to the government order and he asked them to make it clear that they would not be a party to the curbing of normal political activity in the country in the name of war. He said the press had a right to publish news and it must be allowed to function freely. The government should leave it to its own sense of responsibility to act in the best interests of the nation. He said that the government was attempting to exploit the newspapers to help them to control the political movement in the name of war effort. "The charge that the *Satyagraha* movement is pro-Hitler and, therefore, all publicity to it is fomenting anti-war activity is manifestly unjust and cannot be accepted", he said. Even as he finished speaking, a message was handed to him which said that the impugned government

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order had been withdrawn It was also disclosed that the government had agreed to establish press advisory committees in Delhi and the various provincial capitals, whose advice would be sought before any action was taken against any newspaper. The conference appointed a Standing Committee to be in touch with the government on matters relating to the press. The Standing Committee urged the government to standardise procedures for consultation and taking penal action against any papers after warnings had been issued following consultation with the local press advisory committee. Not all provincial Governments were cooperative and in U.P., the government took a long time to appoint an advisory committee and when one was appointed its recommendations were not accepted, as for example in the case of the *National Herald*.

A feature of the Newspaper Editors' Conference was that it was representative of all classes of newspapers, including British owned newspapers which were also represented on the Standing Committee. "The British element", says a writer, "showed marked adaptability and genuine interest to restrain bureaucratic excesses and defend the reasonable rights of the press." There was division among the editors as between editors of Congress papers and editors of independent papers and it was to the credit of Srinivasan that he managed to hold them together by his tact and patience.

Gandhi in a letter to editors of Indian newspapers in February, 1941, said that two statements of his carried by news agencies were suppressed by newspapers as they were not passed by the press adviser. The statements related to continuance of the civil disobedience movement and payment of fines by *Satyagrahis*. The statements were not passed as they were considered prejudicial and incitement for anti-war civil disobedience. Gandhi said: "We have become so used to the press gag that we hardly know that there is a partial paralysis of the press. In the name of war efforts all honest expression of opinion if it is opposed to war efforts conceived by the official word, is effectively suppressed unless an enterprising editor or publisher risks the loss of his press. Thus, my own

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effort, if my honesty be not questioned, is the true effort to end all war and, therefore, in no way anti-British or pro-German."

Gandhi said he had to issue statements from time to time for the conduct of the campaign and to keep it within restraint. "I do not want", he said, "to extend the scope of civil disobedience beyond the present limit. But I do not know that I can exercise that restraint if the press abdicates its function publishing relevant news. I therefore, appeal to the press not to succumb to the gag but to assert its independence by publishing all the *Satyagraha* news in its fullness. Of course, it is open to the editors to criticise and condemn the movement or the statements that may be issued. Editors may signify their disapproval of the gag by either publishing the offending statements and risking prosecution or even confiscation of the press or by stopping publication of their papers altogether by way of protest." Gandhi added: "I need hardly draw attention to the fact that I represent unadulterated non-violence whose spread can do nobody any harm. It is false and cruel to suggest that I could have anything in common with Nazism or Fascism because I happen to oppose imperialism."

Gandhi's letter followed a controversy started by his secretary, Mahadev Desai, who had accused the president of the Editors' Conference of having given an assurance to the government that they would not hinder the war effort. Srinivasan denied that any assurance had been given as suggested. He said that the press should not commit suicide but fight for its liberty "as it is by fighting and not by surrendering or resigning that one can get whatever one wants or wishes to achieve."

On February 4, 1941, the standing committee of the A.I.N.E.C. adopted a resolution moved by P.D. Sharma and seconded by Sir Francis Low (*Times of India*) requesting the government "ordinarily not to ban publication of statements issued by Mahatma Gandhi and in cases where they are inclined to take such a step, they should consult the Central Press Advisory Committee before passing any order thereon."

The A.I.N.E.C. faced a crisis in its ranks in 1942 when the Congress passed the "Quit India" resolution in August. Some

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of its members closed down their papers in accordance with Gandhi's suggestion who himself stopped the *Harijan*. Gandhi's speech at the All India Congress Committee in Bombay was not published in full by newspapers because news agencies themselves decided not to use all of it. The Government imposed severe restrictions on the press in the wake of the August disturbances. These included registration of correspondents, limitation on the number of messages on the disturbances to be published, limitation of headlines and the space to be given to news of disturbances and precensorship with regard to certain categories of news. In U.P., the government issued an order prohibiting the printing or publishing of any matter in any newspaper in a type larger than that of a specimen given in the official gazette notification or in a line of continuous type wider than half of the breadth of the printed page of such publication.

The A.I.N.E.C. considered the new situation at its meeting in Bombay in October, 1942, and Kasturi Srinivasan, who presided, said : "We do not seek to minimise the fact that we have been unable to influence in our favour certain provincial governments. But as against this I may say that war or no war, we did assert our right to give expression to our grievance in the political field and have brought the government to realise the necessity to keep off from interfering with us in that respect." Referring to the pre-censorship and other restrictions imposed on the press, he said ; "Freedom of the press is part of the larger freedom of the country and until the country is free, the press has necessarily to work under the limitation arising from factors and forces that are imposed on it. I have no doubt in my mind that the public do require the press to continue to function, to serve them within the limits of even the diminished opportunities. There is unmistakable evidence that the people do not desire to be starved of news. They want papers to publish and discover ways and means for themselves to serve as best they can. The problem we are confronted with today is to decide what attitude the Indian press should take in the light of the demands of the government. There is no question of our

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willing submission to any proposal which in our opinion is derogatory to the profession or in any way prevents us from functioning as responsible newspapers."

Srinivasan suggested a formula for acceptance by the government which was endorsed by the conference. The formula was an assurance of exercise of self-restraint on the part of the editors and the withdrawal of restrictions by the government in return. The conference while adopting the formula advised editors to observe restraint in the presentation of news of disturbances and to avoid publication of news that might encourage illegal or subversive activities. On the basis of this resolution, the government withdrew the restrictions on the press and the papers which had earlier closed down resumed publication.

But not long after, another crisis brought forth fresh confrontation between the press and the government. Towards the end of 1942, Prof. Bansali, a Gandhian, in the Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) went on an indefinite fast in protest against alleged atrocities by British troops against women in two villages. The C.P. Government issued an order prohibiting newspapers from publishing news of the fast and also the ban itself. Neither the president of the A.I.N.E.C. nor the Standing Committee was consulted before the issue of the order. The Standing Committee of the conference which met in Bombay in December to consider the new development was told that the government was unlikely to accept any demand for the withdrawal of the order. The committee thereupon decided to non-cooperate with the government. It called upon newspapers to suspend publication for a day as a "protest against a recent order passed by a certain provincial government involving a flagrant breach of the agreement reached with the A.I.N.E.C." It also recommended to the newspapers "not to publish until the order is withdrawn (1) all circulars from Government Houses (2) New Year honours list (3) all speeches of members of the British Government, the Government of India and provincial governments except portions thereof which contain decisions and announcements."

It was a historic decision and probably the only occasion

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when Indian newspapers as a body had defied the alien government in direct action. In accordance with the editors' decision, the New Year honours of 1943 were blacked out by Indian newspapers and speeches of ministers and officials shared the same fate. The Delhi chief commissioner served a pre-censorship order on the *Hindustan Times* and the Madras Government retaliated against *The Hindu* by withdrawing facilities to its reporters. The nationalist papers suspended publication on January 6, 1943, as decided upon by the A.I.N.E.C. The confrontation with the government ended on January 13 when it was announced that the C.P. Government had withdrawn the offending order relating to Prof. Bansali's fast and that it had also conceded Bansali's demand for an enquiry into alleged excesses of troops. Bansali broke his 63-day-old fast and Srinivasan advised newspaper editors to withdraw the ban on publication of official news and circulars.

When Srinivasan laid down office as president of the A.I.N.E.C. in January, 1944, tributes were paid to him for what he had done to preserve the unity of the press and to maintain the rights and privileges of the press in its confrontation with the alien government. Devadas Gandhi, editor of the *Hindustan Times* and one of his bitter critics, said when Srinivasan took over the presidentship of the A.I.N.E C., it was an occasion when he had to take up "virtually the managing editorship of the entire press in India." There was every possibility at that time of the press as a body being completely wiped out of existence. "Thanks to Srinivasan's protecting wings the press had not only not been wiped out of existence but the whole conspiracy to do so had been shattered once and for all". Sir Francis Low, editor of the *Times of India* said if one knew something of the differences that cropped up in a body of so many widely divergent interests, one would have some idea of the s' ill and ability with which the retiring president handled, he would not say refractory, but a pretty mulish team. It was difficult indeed to get them all to see alike, but despite divergences they did find unity—unity in diversity.

While the Indian press had to fight for its rights and to stay alive, it had also to undergo various hardships inevitable

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in times of war. The worst of it was the lack of newsprint available quantities of which were controlled by the government. Newspaper owners formed an association called the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society which negotiated with the government for a fair share to all papers in the allotment of newsprint. Newspapers were forced to reduce the number of pages and *The Hindu* published eight pages for a long period. The prices also were increased. The papers were obliged to impose on themselves other austerities at a time when there was a great demand for news and people were prepared to pay any price to get a newspaper. It took a long time even after the end of the war for the newsprint situation to improve and for the newspapers to resume their normal size and meet the increased circulation.

Indian journalists had always nursed a grievance that Congress leaders were more willing to talk to foreign journalists than to their own countrymen and that they practised discrimination. For instance, when Gandhi was in prison in 1930, he gave an interview to George Slocombe, correspondent of the *Daily Herald* of London, who was able to get Gandhi's terms for settlement with the government. His dispatch, which was also published in *The Hindu* by special arrangement, hit international headlines. Slocombe wrote : "Two things seemed to be as clear as crystal during the five hours I spent with him : his burning love and his burning hate. He loves India as he loves all mankind. He hates British domination in India as he hates evil."

Gandhi conveyed a new offer of settlement to the British Government through another British correspondent, Stewart Gelder, to whom he gave an exclusive interview in 1943. The offer was, however, rejected by L.S. Amery, secretary of state, who said it was not free from "obscurities and reservations". Indian correspondents covering the Simla Conference of Indian leaders convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in July 1945, failed to get any information from any of the leaders attending the conference on what took place and why it failed. "Everyone appeared to be dumb", wrote one correspondent, "and mystery surrounded every face and even number one newsmakers and expert readers of faces failed in a manner in which

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they have never failed before." Some of the correspondents who were worried by the deceptive faces at Simla and also the practice of top Indian leaders favouring foreign correspondents for exclusive interviews, approached Jawaharlal Nehru one evening and put this question to him. The issue had become more insistent because in Simla one foreign correspondent, Preston Grover of the Associated Press of America was successful in getting interviews from Gandhi, Nehru, Azad and Jinnah. Nehru denied the charge that Congress leaders had an inferiority complex and that they preferred the white skin to the brown. He said there were certain "special circumstances" for such exclusive interviews to foreign journalists. There were very few men in the political life of India who were known outside India to the rest of the world. Naturally, the outside world wanted to know their views on serious matters concerning India and these few leaders also wanted publicity for India in the foreign press and so whenever opportunities offered themselves, they welcomed them. Indian journalists were interested in day-to-day Indian politics while foreign journalists were interested in different problems concerning India. Whenever they met him or Gandhi they asked questions in which Indian journalists were not so much interested because they knew their views on those subjects.

In 1946, popular ministries took over in the provinces and the interim Government led by Jawarharlal Nehru was formed at the Centre some months later. The relations of the provincial governments run by the Congress with the press were smooth in the beginning but deteriorated with the outbreak of communal riots and industrial strife. Ordinances were issued giving special powers to the governments to deal with the press and there was a storm of protest from the press. Pandit Gobind Vallabh Pant, chief minister of U.P. spoke of the government's problem in tackling the press. "If papers", he told a deputation, "go on expressing ideas which are not likely to raise but to drag down sections of the community, what would you advise us to do ? If we are asked to intervene then your methods as you can easily understand can be only those which are available to us under the law. These

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methods are not to our liking. I have already told you that we have taken pretty good care not to make use of them."

On the eve of the partition of India, riots broke out in the Punjab and there were unimaginable massacres and atrocities and millions of people were uprooted from their homes. The trouble was aggravated by writings in the press and one of the worst offenders was the *Dawn*, the Muslim League organ published from Delhi. The Chief Minister of Punjab, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, complained to Vallabhbhai Patel, home member in the Interim Government, in November, 1946, that the *Dawn* was publishing objectionable articles and requested that action be taken against it. Patel replied that press reports indicated that the press in Delhi had come to an agreement on the question of treatment of communal news. The government, he said, was not satisfied with it but they were prepared to give it a fair trial. "My policy is", he said, "to watch for the time being but to act swiftly if the arrangement appears inadequate or defective."

On November 28, the Viceroy, Wavell, wrote to Patel that the Punjab governor had written to him expressing concern at the "tone of the last few issues of the *Dawn* which published an "inaccurate and inflammatory" account of the Rohtak disturbances and other articles likely to stimulate communal hatred in Punjab. The government had ordered the arrest of the Rohtak correspondent of the *Dawn*. The governor wanted immediate action to stop publication of communal articles as those complained of. Patel replied that the editor of the *Dawn*, who had signed the convention on publication of communal news, had not implemented it properly. He agreed that action was most urgent and suggested that an ordinance might be issued vesting in the government special powers to deal with the situation. Later, in a letter to Sir John Colville, acting governor-general, Patel informed him that on Wavell's suggestion he had convened a meeting of editors of important local papers and members of the Central Press Advisory Committee. He told him of the mischief that was likely to result from the almost unrestrained manner in which certain papers were publishing and commenting on news of a communal character.

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Patel said a code of voluntary restrictions had been evolved at the meeting of editors and it had been in operation for a month. He, however, felt it was not being observed either in letter or in spirit by some newspapers. Patel said he found it distasteful to control the press by taking powers under an ordinance. In his address to the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference he had emphasised the importance of maintaining the liberty of the press but he stressed the obligation which that liberty involved. "In ordinary times, the government can afford to give more latitude to the press but in the prevailing communal tension in the country when a slight deviation from the path of responsibility and rectitude is likely to cause untold harm, I feel that the freedom of the press will have to be controlled as a matter of painful necessity." He said that the Governments of Punjab, Bihar and Bengal had issued ordinances and taken action against several papers.

Patel had no peace from the *Dawn*. On April 22, 1947, he wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, drawing his attention to a report in the *Dawn* on Radio Pakistan. The paper, he said, had exhorted its readers to tune in to an illegal radio station, "the clear aim of which is to promote direct action by nefarious means and fits ill with the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal (for communal harmony)." The report mentioned by Patel said ; "A new radio station has lately come in the air (not AIR) which presumably operates underground. It begins and ends its programme with the slogan, 'Pakistan Zindabad'. Listeners in Delhi can hear it on 70 metre band at 8-30 a.m. and 8 p.m." The *Dawn's* report was also noticed by Rajaji, who was also a member of the Interim Government. Rajaji wrote to Patel that if it was "not taken notice of it will lead on to utter and wholesale defiance." Patel informed Mountbatten of the campaign carried on by the *Dawn* against him and AIR and said enquiries which he had made had shown that "as usual the *Dawn* is cent per cent off the track and the whole article is a tissue of lies and misstatements. . . . I need hardly say that the days of this kind of journalism are numbered."

Jawaharlal Nehru was not happy either with the writings in the press. He wrote to Patel late in 1947 that the chief minister

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of U.P. had complained to him that newspapers were presenting news of the happenings in the Punjab in a haphazard way, which was creating great excitement. The chief minister had wanted to know if something could not be done to tone down the presentation of news so that a calmer atmosphere could prevail. Nehru said : "I am afraid our press is not very helpful. The recent statements published about the position in Hyderabad have not helped us. Again, the news about Mountbatten's going to London and somebody also taking his place had no basis in fact, so far as I know."

Incidentally, the *Dawn* distinguished itself by making a *faux pas* on Mountbatten's picture published in its front page. Narrating the incident Alan Campbell Johnson, press attache to Mountbatten said : "I went round to Mountbatten's suite and had a discussion with the viceroy-designate.... He showed me the morning's masterpiece on the front page of the *Dawn*. It was a photograph of Ronnie Brockman (of Mountbatten's staff) and Elizabeth Ward, Lady Mountbatten's private secretary, in which they are of course described as "Lord and Lady Louis arriving."

Mountbatten in a letter to Nehru in 1947 clarified his views on censorship. This was in reply to a letter from Nehru in which he had referred to questions put to him on censorship by British and foreign press correspondents at a press conference. Mountbatten said if there was to be censorship, the question arose whether it should be military or political censorship, and who was to impose it. Military censorship followed certain well prescribed lines—the banning of references to place, names, number of casualties, etc., which might affect the security of military forces on operation. Political censorship involved the stopping of news which the government felt to be obnoxious or inaccurate. It would be virtually impossible to set a limit to the government's discretion in the matter. Mountbatten felt it would be impossible to impose censorship conditions which could be regarded or would be accepted by the press as being purely military. If the complaint was about inaccuracy the best solution, he thought, would be to increase the amount of factual background for the press and to maintain as much personal contact as possible with correspondents.

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He proposed that an Indian official should give the reports in the Map Room which should be previously passed by the Ministry of Information and that a daily summary should be issued under the aegis of the ministry. Mountbatten's observations came during the Punjab disturbances which were widely covered by foreign correspondents.

Patel who was shown Mountbatten's letter, wrote to him : "There is no desire on our part to have any censorship, more especially of foreign messages. I entirely agree with you that any censorship at the present moment would defeat its own purposes and do us harm. It is true that many of the messages sent by the foreign correspondents have been inaccurate and sometimes tendentious. Nevertheless, I am quite clear that there should be no censorship of the press. I am making it clear to the Communications Department that no message from accredited press correspondents should be stopped or censored."

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10

PRESS LAWS

The East India Company from the governor-general downwards to the least important official in the administration was hostile to the press although it was owned and managed by Englishmen. It took a long time before Indian-owned newspapers and Indian journalists appeared on the scene and the Europeans had a monopoly of the print media. The staple diet of the early journals was scandal, gossip and official lapses and misdemeanours. No one was spared and even the highest in the land had to go to court to protect his honour. There were no legal restrictions on the press as such and the only weapon which could be used against offending editors were pre-censorship, and proceedings for libel and deportation. Deportation was the most effective weapon used to eliminate troublesome and unwanted editors and Silk Buckingham was the most important victim of this device. But when half-castes or Anglo-Indians as they were called, were appointed editors it became difficult to deport them since they were not natives of Britain. The Supreme Court of Calcutta and the Privy Council in London felt the law had to be made stringent to plug this loophole.

However, it was not until 1799 that the first restrictions on the press were imposed by law. The man responsible was the Marquis of Wellesley, who came to India in 1798 as governor-general. He was no friend of the press and the immediate provocation for his anger against the press was an article in the *Asiatic Mirror* by its editor, Bruce, who spoke of the relative strength of the English and native forces engaged in the war against Tipu Sultan. Wellesley wrote to Sir Alfred Clarke, commander-in-chief: "I shall take an early opportunity of transmitting rules for the conduct of the whole

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editors. In the meantime, if you cannot tranquillise this and other mischievous publications, be so good as to suppress them by force and send their persons to Europe."

Before Wellesley, as we have noted, there were no restrictions on the press except pre-censorship. The only thing editors had to fear was assault, the possibility of being challenged to a duel by an aggrieved person and the English law of libel. The pre-publication censorship was extended by degrees to the entire printed word. The object was to prevent publication of reports unfavourable to the administration. But while the original intention was to stop local opinion from reaching England, it was extended to prevent its spread in India itself. The Bombay censor was rebuked by Wellesley for permitting premature disclosure of news of the appointment of Cornwallis to succeed Wellesley in Bombay newspapers. The censor, Warden, was on one occasion recalled to Bombay from a week-end holiday to delete passages from speeches in the House of Commons critical of officials in India.

Wellesley's attitude to the press was described by a foreign writer in these words: "During his period of office, this dread of the free diffusion of knowledge became a chronic disease continually afflicting the members of government with all sorts of hypochondriacal dry fears and nightmares in which vision of the printing press and the Bible were ever making his flesh to creep and his hand to stand erect with honour. It was our policy in those days to keep the natives of India in the profoundest possible state of barbarism and darkness and every attempt to diffuse the light of knowledge among the people either of our own or of the independent states was vehemently opposed and resented."

Wellesley issued the regulations for the control of the press in May, 1799. Their chief provisions were: (1) Every printer of a newspaper was required to print his name at the bottom of the paper. (2) Every editor and proprietor of a newspaper should notify his name and address to the secretary to the government. (3) No newspaper should be published on Sundays. (4) No newspaper should be published

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unless it was inspected previously by the secretary to government. (5) The penalty for infringement of the law would be immediate deportation.

Rules were framed for the guidance of the secretary to the government acting as censor. These banned publication of all information relating to the finance of the Company, troop movements, shipping news, naval or military preparations, movement of supplies or spices, reprinting of extracts from European newspapers which might affect the credit of the British power with Indian states, observations conveying information to an enemy or "exciting alarm or commotion in the company's territories, such as statements with regard to the probability of war or peace with any of the Indian powers and all private scandals or libels on individuals." A chronicler of the times says: "The press on the whole accepted the restrictions and with evasions of pre-censorship on the one hand and warnings on the other, a working basis was established which obviated the need to resort to deportation."

An ordinance was issued in 1823 by the acting Governor-General, John Adam, called the Adam Regulations which made the restrictions on the press more stringent. It laid down that every newspaper, journal, pamphlet or printed matter in any language should obtain a licence from the Governor-General in Council signed by the chief secretary before publication. The governor-general in council was empowered to cancel the licence after issuing due notice and it would be published in the gazette. The second part of the regulations, called "Regulation of printing establishments, 1923", prohibited the publication or circulation of any newspaper or book or printed matter without a licence. Unlicensed presses were to be attached by magistrates. It was laid down that the name of the printer and the place where it was printed should be prominently published in the first and last pages of the publication.

A more sympathetic attitude towards the press was adopted by Sir Charles Metcalfe, another acting governor-general who, in 1835, promulgated the "Registration of the Press Act."

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Metcalfe appreciated the importance of newspapers and felt they should be allowed to function without restraint. He believed the press was an instrument more for the education of the people than for information to the rulers. He was also opposed to any discrimination as between the English-owned and Indian-owned press. He wanted closer official association with the press as the only way of ensuring informed and balanced criticism. Metcalfe abolished the Bengal Press Regulation of 1823 and the Bombay Press Regulations of 1825 and 1827. The new Act required a printer and publisher of a newspaper to make a declaration before a magistrate regarding the place of publication. It was also required that every paper or book printed in a press after declaration should bear the name of the printer or publisher and the place of publication.

In the wake of the Mutiny of 1857, Lord Canning, governor-general, promulgated the Press Act of 1857 which re-introduced all the restrictions imposed on the press by the Adam Regulations of 1825. It was intended to "regulate the establishment of printing presses and to restrain in certain cases the circulation of printing books and papers." Printing presses were required to obtain a licence to function or to print a newspaper or book. The government was empowered to issue licences at its discretion and revoke them at any time. The government was also given the power to prohibit the publication or circulation of any newspaper, book or printed matter in any part or throughout its territories. It was provided that no newspaper or periodical or pamphlet printed in a licensed press "shall contain any observations or statements impugning the motives or designs of the British Government either in England or India or in any way tending to bring the said government into hatred and contempt, to excite disaffection or unlawful resistance to its orders or to weaken its lawful authority or the lawful authority of its civil or military servants." It also said that "no such newspaper, pamphlet or book shall contain observations having a tendency to weaken the friendship towards the British Government of native princes, chiefs or states in dependence or alliance with it." The provisions of

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the Act were to apply to both the European-owned and Indian-owned newspapers and this was the cause of European hostility to Lord Canning who became unpopular in that community for what was called his "soft" policy towards the natives.

In 1867, a law was passed called the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 which sought to regulate printing presses and newspapers by a system of registration and to preserve copies of newspapers and books printed in India. This law, with modifications, continues to be in force today. This law provided that no press could be started by any person unless he had declared himself as keeper of such a press before a magistrate giving his address and other details. No newspaper could be published unless the publisher made a similar declaration. The object of this provision was to fix responsibility for the publication of a newspaper or book so that if the law was violated, the offender could be punished.

The most controversial law against the press was passed during the viceroyalty of Lord Lytton in 1878 and it was restricted to the Indian-owned language press. It was provoked by the writings in the Bengali press which were characterised by immoderation of language and character assassination. Lytton assumed office at a time when serious discussion was going on both in Britain and India among officials on the need for action against the language press. The law which was passed was called, "An Act for the better control of publications in oriental languages—1878". Better known as the Vernacular Press Act it empowered any magistrate of a district or a commissioner of police in a Presideney town to call upon a printer and publisher of a newspaper to furnish a bond undertaking not to publish certain kind of material, to demand security and to forfeit it if it was thought fit, and to confiscate any printed matter deemed objectionable. No printer or publisher against whom such action had been taken could resort to a court of law. The Act empowered the government to issue search warrants and enter the premises of any press and take summary action without going to court. The government could under the Act serve notice on the proprietor that his newspaper had printed seditious matter or

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incited to felony and follow it up after two days in the case of a daily newspaper and seven days in the case of a weekly with confiscation, if the offence was repeated either in the same newspaper or in any other paper published in the same press by the same proprietor or printer. The law required all native proprietors to furnish a bond for Rs. 10,000 while registering their papers, which was subject to forfeiture if an offence was committed. The reason given for taking action specially against the language press was that they "circulated among people who were likely to believe anything they read whereas those who could read English papers were capable of judging the contents themselves."

The obnoxious Act, which led to a storm of protest from Indian leaders (as described in a previous chapter) was repeated in 1881 by Lord Ripon, the "benevolent viceroy" as he was called by Indians. "The people of India can never think of Lord Lytton without a curse," *The Hindu* wrote. It said he was the viceroy "that gagged their press and disarmed their person, coarsely abused the most respected and respectable leaders of the native community assembled under his own roof on a public business, proposed legislation to close to the natives the door of competition in England for entering the civil service . . . . A viceroy that did these and many more acts of injustice and despotism left the country without a single soul being sorry for it."

To meet terrorist acts of violence and bomb outrages the government rushed through the Imperial Legislative Council on June 8, 1908, two Bills, the Explosive Substances Bill and the Newspapers (incitement to offences) Bill. Sir Harvey Adamson, home member, who piloted the Bills, explained the object of the Newspapers Bill as "to put an end to their (that is, of newspapers which contain any incitement to murder or any offence under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 or to any act of violence) existence . . . by giving power to confiscate the printing press and to extinguish the newspaper." The Act empowered a district magistrate to confiscate the printing press of any newspaper which in his opinion contained an incitement to acts of violence. Adamson said there were two factors

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in the emergency caused by terrorism: "the actual making and use of bombs . . . . and the public incitement to murder and acts of violence carried on through the medium of an infamous section of the press."

"A terrific means has been devised for the strangling of newspapers in this country," *The Hindu* wrote. "An undesirable newspaper may now be effectively killed by any district magistrate, its press, plant, machinery, tools and every printing or other material connected with it confiscated and the very name of the paper obliterated forever . . . . Violence may easily be made to mean resistance and resistance to include passive resistance which latter expression may mean anything to constitute an act of violence which term the Act has left carefully undefined."

Action was taken under the Act against nine printing presses, seven of which were confiscated. In U.P., the editor of an Urdu paper was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment for an article on the educational policy of the British administration in Egypt; in Bombay, editors of three language papers were sentenced to imprisonment and in Madras Srinivasa Iyengar, editor of *India*, was sentenced to five years' transportation.

The new curbs on the press and the repressive policy did not apparently produce the results expected by the government for a more draconian law "for the better control of the press" was passed in 1910. Describing the state of the press during this period, Valentine Chirol wrote: "Exhortations to hatred and violence have been the stock in trade not only of the most popular newspapers in the vernaculars but some of even leading newspapers published in English but edited and owned by Indians." Chirol gave some samples of the writings of the language press. The *Hind Swarajya* (Bombay): "Englishmen! Who are Englishmen? They are the present rulers of the country but how did they become our rulers? By throwing the noose of dependence round our necks, by making us forget our old learning, by leading us along the path of sin, by keeping us ignorant of the use of arms. Oh! my simple countrymen! By their teaching, adultery has entered

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homes and women have begun to be led astray. Alas! has India, the golden land lost all her heroes? Are they all eunuchs, timid and afraid, forgetful of their duty, preferring to die a slow death of torture, silent witnesses of the ruin of their country? Oh! Indians descended from a race of heroes! Why are you afraid of Englishmen? They are not gods but men like yourselves or rather monsters who have ravished your Sita-like beauty. If there be any Rama amongst you, let him go forth to bring back your Sita. Raise the banner of *Swadeshi*, crying 'Victory to the Mother.' Rescue the truth and accomplish the good of India."

The *Yugantar* of Calcutta: "Sedition has no meaning from the Indian standpoint. If the whole nation is inspired to throw its yoke and become independent, then in the eye of God and in the eye of justice, whose claim is more reasonable, the Indians' or the Englishman's? The Indian has come to see that independence is the panacea for all his evils. He will, therefore, even swim in a sea of blood to reach his goal. The British dominion over India is a gross myth. It is because the Indian holds this myth in his bosom that his sufferings are so great today. Long ago, the Indian *rishis* preached the destruction of falsehood and the triumph of truth. And this foreign rule based on injustice is a gross falsehood. It must be subverted and true *Swadeshi* rule established. May truth be victorious!"

Commenting, Chirol said the quotations from these and other papers "will suffice to show what the freedom of the press stood for in India—in a country where there is an almost superstitious reverence for, and faith in, the printed word, where the influence of the press is in proportion to the ignorance of the vast majority of its readers and where, unfortunately, the more violent and scurrilous a newspaper becomes the more its popularity grows among the very classes that boast of their education. They are by no means obscure papers and some of them such as *Kal*, the *Hind Swarajya*, and especially the *Yugantar*, which became at one time a real power in Bengal, achieved a circulation hitherto unknown to the Indian press. . . . . The mischief they have done still lives and will not be easily eradicated."

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The Press Act of 1910 provided that every keeper of a printing press who was required to make a declaration under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, should at the same time deposit an amount not less than Rs. 500 or more than Rs. 2,000 as the magistrate might require which might be forfeited for violation of the law and a fresh security demanded. The government was also empowered to close down the press and to forfeit publications. The government could declare certain publications forfeited and issue search warrants for the same and any officer in charge of a post office was empowered to detain any "suspected article other than a letter or a parcel in course of transmission by post."

By an irony of fate, the man who drafted the law and expressed his support to it was an Indian, S.P. Sinha, law member and the first Indian ever to be appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council and thereby hangs a tale.

According to Clarke Fleetwood Wilson, Sinha's only friend on the council, Sinha became very disillusioned within three months after taking office "now that he sees the Government of India from the inside." "Poor Sinha", Wilson wrote, "intended telling Minto (viceroy) that he wished to give up his appointment finding, like myself, that no self-respecting man can remain here." Wilson urged Sinha to stay on at least out of loyalty to Lord Morley, secretary of state, for India. Morley, when he heard of Sinha's intention, wrote to Wilson: "Our appointment of him to a seat on the council was the most marked step taken since I took charge of this office demanding as much courage and perseverance as anything ever done by an Indian secretary . . . . His retirement will both discredit the choice . . . its effect upon India would be disastrous."

When Sinha was asked to draft the Press Bill, he expressed his opposition to it and threatened to resign. The viceroy agreed to tone down the Bill but Sinha refused to change his mind unless G.K. Gokhale, his friend and mentor, promised not to oppose the Bill. Gokhale, who was a member of the select committee on the Bill, wrote a minute of dissent to the committee's report. When the Bill was introduced in the

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Legislative Council he moved a number of amendments all of which were lost. When the Bill was put to vote, he did not cast his vote against it and thereby saved his friend from an embarrassing situation. Gokhale later explained his decision as taken in the larger interests of the country and the Congress. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the Moderate leader, was very angry with Gokhale for his action. He said Gokhale had no business to enter into a pact with Sinha. He should have voted against the Bill and made his vote and his hostility to the Bill known, he said. "It is difficult for those who believe in civil liberties", said another Moderate leader, "not to feel disappointed that Mr. Gokhale who, holding the connections that he did and notwithstanding his desire to ensure the success of the experiment of Indian appointment to the Executive Council, should have felt himself compelled to abstain from voting against a measure which was reprehensible in character."

Sir Herbert Risley, home member, who moved the Bill in the Legislative Council on February 4, 1910, said: "We see the most influential and widely read portion of the Indian press incessantly occupied in rendering the government by law established odious in the sight of the Indian people. The government is foreign and is, therefore, selfish and tyrannical. It drains the country of its wealth; it has impoverished the people and brought about famine on a scale and with a frequency unknown before; its public works, roads, railways and canals have generated malaria; it has introduced plague by poisoning wells in order to reduce the population that has to be held in subjection; it has deprived the Indian peasant of his land; the Indian artisan of his industry; and the Indian merchant of his trade; it has destroyed religion by its godless system of education; it seeks to destroy caste by polluting maliciously and of set purpose the salt and sugar that men eat and the cloth that they wear; it allows Indians to be ill-treated in British colonies, levies heavy taxes and spends them on the army; it pays high salaries to Englishmen and employs Indians only in the worst paid posts—in short, it has enslaved a whole people who are now struggling to be free. Everyday, the press proclaims openly or by suggestion or allusion that the

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only cure for the ills of India is independence from foreign rule, independence to be won by heroic deeds, self-sacrifice, martyrdom on the part of the young, in any case by some form of violence. Hindu mythology, ancient and modern history and more especially the European literature of revolution are ransacked to furnish examples that justify revolt and proclaim its inevitable success. The consequence of the ever flowing stream of slander and incitement to outrages are now upon us. What was dimly foreseen a few years ago has actually come to pass. We are at the present moment confronted with a murderous conspiracy whose aim is to subvert the government of the country and to make British rule impossible by establishing general terrorism. Their organisation is effective and far reaching; their numbers are believed to be considerable; the leaders work in secret and are blindly obeyed by their youthful followers; the method they favour is political assassination. These things are the natural and necessary consequence of the teachings of certain journals. They have prepared the soil in which anarchy flourishes; they have sown the seed and they are answerable for the crop. The chain of causation is clear. Not only does the campaign of violence date from the change in the tone of the press but specific outbursts of incitement have been followed by specific outrages. To my mind, the worst feature of the present situation is the terrible influence the press exercises upon the student class."

A deputation on behalf of the Press Defence Association waited on Lord Chelmsford, viceroy, in 1916 and urged him to repeal the Press Act. The viceroy told them: "The function of the press in forming public opinion holds within its compass the possibility of an ideal as high and noble as any that can be imagined." The principle of a free press, he said, "commands the instinctive adherence of every Englishman . . . Anything in the nature of muzzling the press strikes right across the grain of my whole being." Chelmsford pointed out that the government had issued instructions to implement the Act with leniency and discrimination and said that in no case had a single appeal to a High Court against the local government's orders succeeded, and in the majority of cases, the

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courts had definitely "branded the articles complained of as objectionable." Giving statistics about the operation of the Act, he said 143 papers had been warned once, and 30 thrice or oftener. Only three had their security forfeited. "The figures", he said, "do not support the theory that a journalist's career is as perilous as you suggest."

The deputation had claimed that the "press is now honest and law abiding and that the necessity for restrictions has disappeared." Chelmsford said that the history of the press in India "is against your theory." In 1878, he said, a growing section of the Indian press was expressing covert or open hostility to the government. The passing of the Act of that year exercised a restraining influence but when it was removed there was a recrudescence of malevolent hostility. "From 1884 to 1898, a section of the press steadily grew more scurrilous, more malignant, more seditious until the penal law had to be strengthened in 1898 but even that was not sufficient. Misrepresentation and vilification of government and even overt sedition went steadily until the Newspapers (incitement to violence) Act was passed in 1908 and it was only when that proved inadequate that the Press Act of 1910 was passed, and it really checked the flood that was over the land." The viceroy did not agree that the danger had passed away. "So long as there are papers in India, as there still are, that in pursuit of their own ends think it right to magnify the ills from which she suffers, to harp upon plague, famine, malaria and poverty and ascribe them all to the curse of an alien government; so long as there are papers that play on the weaknesses of impressionable boys and encourage that lack of discipline and of respect for all authority that has done so much to swell the ranks of secret revolution; so long as it is considered legitimate to stir up hatred and contempt in order to foster discontent—I feel that any relaxation of the existing law would be followed as surely as night follows day by a gradual increase of virulence until we should come back to the conditions that prevailed before the passing of the Act."

In 1921, the Government of India appointed a committee

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under the chairmanship of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, law member, to go into the press laws and make recommendations. Many leading editors and journalists gave evidence before the committee. Annie Besant, editor of *New India*, told the committee that what could be safely published in Bombay risked forfeiture of security in Madras and the harassed editor had to find out what were the subjects on which the governor of the state from where the paper was published was sensitive. And there was no uniformity in the treatment of newspapers. She said the editor of an Anglo-Indian newspaper was allowed to make violent attacks on Indians who advocated reforms which were later made into law. But if an Indian editor replied to the attacks he was prosecuted for exciting hatred. The committee wanted to know who controlled a newspaper, the editor or the proprietor. There were conflicting views. Panchcowrie Bannerjee, editor of *Nayak* (Calcutta) said: "More or less, we editors and printers are dummies in the hands of our proprietors. I am not ashamed to confess that we are obliged at times to take to seditious writing at the behest of our proprietors because it sells. My name and Surendranath (Bannerjee's) name have a commercial value and that is why they allowed Surendranath's name to be printed in the front page of the *Bengalee*. Similarly, they have allowed my name to be printed in the *Nayak* because it has a commercial value." The committee was told that conditions had radically changed since the Press Act was passed in 1910. The climate of violence had disappeared but the general tone of the press had become embittered.

The committee recommended the repeal of the Press Acts of 1908 and 1910, the amendment of the Registration of the Press and Books Act, 1867 to enable seizure of seditious literature, to make it obligatory to print the name of the editor in every issue of the paper and to reduce the maximum penalty of imprisonment for violation of the law to six months. The committee said: "More direct and violent forms of sedition are now disseminated more from the platform and through the agency of itinerant propagandists than by the press." It hoped that with the growth of representative institutions, party

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newspapers would develop. It found that the two Press Acts had done little to check the evils they were meant to remove. It noted that the forces of violence which were strong at the time the Acts were passed, had died out and several of those people who believed in the cult of violence had abjured it and taken to constitutional forms of agitation. The Press Acts of 1908 and 1910 were repealed in 1922 under the Press Law Repeal and Amendment Act, 1922.

When the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi launched the *Satyagraha* movement in 1930, the Government of India issued the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Ordinance, which empowered the government to demand security from a printing press and newspaper, which could be forfeited if any objectionable matter was published. The ordinance was made into a permanent Act in 1935.

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11

IN FREE INDIA

The long and arduous battle for independence came to an end on August 15, 1947, when India after partition became free from alien rule. As the country rejoiced and celebrated the historic event, a jubilant press joined its countrymen in hailing the advent of freedom for which it had fought shoulder to shoulder with the nationalist forces and made enormous sacrifices in men and material, braving the cruel persecution of the colonial rulers. In a striking editorial, *The Hindu* described the ship of freedom which had reached port thus : "After a century of storm and stress, the ship of Indian freedom has come into port. Battered heavily by wind and sea, scarred and seamed in many a fierce encounter with embattled hosts, she has suffered grievous losses and has had to jettison much precious cargo. She is not spick and span as we had pictured her in the morning time of our hopes. It is on the whole a sad homecoming. There are treacherous shoals about and the pilot is more than a little weary. But she is a brave little ship for all that, for she carries the high hopes and ambitions of 400 million. On her proud mast-head there broods, like the spirit of peace, the white soul of India. . . . India embarks on the endless adventure of freedom, crippled and maimed in the sight of the world. She is, however, a great believer in the healing touch of time and in the magic of natural affinities."

In the first flush of freedom, the press rode with the current and was sympathetic and cooperative with the new national government which was faced with a deluge of problems plunging the country into strife and bloodshed and instability. A section, however, had not got over the hangover of colonial rule and indulged in fanning communal passions and hatred

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and in scurrilous writing. Sensational journalism became a fashion with some and the country's integrity and interests ceased to be paramount. A Bengali editor is quoted by a writer as having confessed that he adopted a communal policy "because playing down riots and disturbances curbed his sales." "Even the newsboys", the editor is quoted as having said, "refuse to touch my paper if my rivals report a larger number of deaths than I do." The leaders who were running the government and who had established complete rapport with the press during the freedom struggle were now saddened that the press as a whole was not with them in meeting the challenges faced by the new-born government. They seemed to behave, the leaders thought, as an opposition force as they did during the British regime when the need was to play a constructive and cooperative role.

Frank Moraes, editor of the *Times of India*, referred to the attitude of Indian editors in the early years of independence and said : "In the early years of independence, Indian editors had to make up their minds on what attitude they should adopt vis-a-vis Nehru's newly established government. . . . I decided after some reflection and consultation that since Nehru was faced virtually with no opposition in Parliament and since a democratic government could not effectively express itself in the absence of an opposition, the press should take it upon itself to function as an unofficial opposition outside Parliament, exercising that role with responsibility and circumspection."

Writing on the same subject *The Hindu* felt that even barely a year after freedom was achieved the suspicion and distrust which clouded the relations between the alien government and the nationalist press "continued in a very perceptible manner under the Free India Government." The Hindu said in the new circumstances the "press may be expected to take a more detached as also a more responsible view of its obligations on the one hand to the government of the day, and on the other to the people as a whole, opposing official policy when it must, supporting it when it can and at all times bringing instructive opinion to bear from different angles on all important issues so that the people may decide with full knowledge."

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Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the earliest in the government to voice his displeasure against the press. He had a dig at editors when addressing the All-India Newspapers Editors Conference in 1952, he said : "Of course, it is hardly proper to use the word 'wise' in connection with newspapers. There is no reason why newspapers should not have at least some small bit of leisured thinking and wisdom hidden away in a corner if not in the leading article always." Nehru asked : "For whom do we want press freedom—for the writer or for the owner to coerce his employee to write against his conscience ?" Seven years later, in 1959, in speeches in Chandigarh and Bombay, Nehru again attacked the press, questioning the bona fides of the editors. He said it had been taken for granted that editors of Indian newspapers could not be expected to realise or speak the truth when discussing certain aspects of state policy. He recalled Stanley Baldwin's (British prime minister) remark about newspapers that they enjoyed power without responsibility and said there were no great editorial personalities in India who could stand up to newspaper owners and to advertisers. In another speech in Delhi Nehru described the press as both the product and symbol of private enterprise and editors as its champions against state control and regulation.

N. Raghunathan, well-known journalist, made this comment on Nehru's fulminations against the press : "Mr Nehru has got into a habit of coming down with a heavy hand on the bad boys of the press. But though he is never consciously unfair, the cumulative effect of these periodical fulminations is definitely unfortunate. According to their personal predilections, people may conclude that he is inclined to be intolerant of all criticism or that the press of this country is dominated by the bad boys."

There was a touch of irony in Nehru's disparaging remarks for he was the darling of the Indian press both before and after independence. He occupied quite a considerable space in the columns of newspapers. When he was not making speeches, which were reported at length and verbatim in some papers, he was issuing statements about the party, Government

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and international affairs and these were treated as news of great importance. When he was not speaking or making statements, he wrote articles which were distributed to the national dailies which published them prominently. *The Hindu* wrote : "It is clear that the prime minister looks upon the press more or less as a kind of permanent opposition. He has evidently been surprised by the range and volume of criticism made by newspapers of domestic policies initiated by his *government and* he has brought himself to think that these have been inspired by self-interest. This is pure delusion."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the strong man of the Congress and number two in the National Government, was also not happy with the status of the press after freedom. In a letter to Nehru in June 1949, he wrote : "There is an absence of understanding both in the press and in the legislature in regard to some of our foremost problems of the day. Yet there can be no stopping their writing on these subjects or making public references."

When the *Times of India* wrote an editorial critical of the government in connection with the escape from house arrest of Mir Laik Ali, ex-prime minister of Hyderabad, in March, 1950, Patel's secretary, Shanker, wrote to K. Gopalaswami, acting editor of the paper : "I saw your editorial on Laik Ali's escape. I hope in calmer moments you have realised that you have rushed into print far too soon. That particular news about his keeping a beard is entirely unfounded. He did keep his moustache untrimmed but that you will agree is unlikely to be particularly noticed. I would have liked the press and Parliament to suspend judgment until there was some material to go upon. As it is, both have reacted on sheer speculation even to the extent of involving the I.G. of Police without realising that he is not in a position to defend himself. What is worse, when statements are contradicted or proved untrue, there is no retraction or regret either on the part of the press or on the part of members of Parliament. After all, it is common prudence to allocate responsibility only after the facts have been ascertained."

In another letter on the same incident, Shanker wrote ;

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"The whole press seems to have reacted to it as if a great national calamity has happened. Escapes of criminals from jails where guards and rules were much more strict, are not uncommon."

C. Rajagopalachari, another great leader and the last governor-general of India, did not have a good opinion of the Indian press. Campbell Johnson, press attache to Lord Mountbatten, writes in his book, *Mission with Mountbatten* that C.R. told him "that the Indian press had a long way to go before it could achieve its full freedom. Asked what influence it had on Indian politics he said : 'Very little. The Congress had dominated the political scene and the press instead of providing informed criticism was nothing more than a body of political propagandists. If there was to be a change in the balance of power all that the press would do would be to follow suit and one lot of propagandists would succeed another.' He said he had told an old journalist friend of his in Madras that the essential thing for the Indian press to do was to concentrate first of all on administrative matters rather than on political formulae. Once they began dealing with things which affected the daily lives of the people they would begin to exert a genuine influence. He said he agreed with the view that Indian journalism was much nearer the American in its tendency to outspokenness and overstatement."

C.R. who as home minister, introduced the first press control bill after freedom (as we shall see later in this chapter) became the victim of a controversy in the press when his candidature was canvassed for the presidentship of the Indian Republic in 1950. The press disclosed that besides C.R., Rajendra Prasad, president of the Constituent Assembly, was also a candidate for the prestigious post. The *Lokvani*, a Hindi weekly of Jaipur in Rajasthan, published pictures of C.R. and Rajendra Prasad side by side on the front page along with a story on who was likely to be chosen president. Sending a cutting of this report to C.R., a Congressman told him that Hiralal Shastri, prominent Congress leader who later became chief minister, and his followers were canvassing in favour of Prasad and against him.

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Sending the letter and cutting to Patel, C.R., who was then governor-general, wrote that he did not want that the Presidency should become the subject matter of "title page propaganda". He added: "If it is true that the *Lokvani* belongs to one of Shastri's group perhaps he may be told that the picture is objectionable so that he may not repeat such stuff." Patel in his reply said that Hiralal Shastri had told him that the editor had taken the idea from the *Statesman* and there was no intention whatsoever to raise any controversy. C.R. sent him another press cutting, this time from the Bombay weekly, *Blitz*, with the remark: "This cutting seems to be too bad to be ignored." He asked. "Do you think we could induce Rajen Babu to do something to prevent this kind of gossip? The *Blitz* report had said that members of the Constituent Assembly from the south who were "anxious to keep Rajaji away from Madras politics are canvassing in his favour for the Presidency while a large number of members from the north, who dislike C.R. for being too clever and crafty for an average Congressman, prefer Rajendra Prasad." The report added: "A cold and calculating politician that Rajaji is, he is in the meantime quietly consolidating his position. While pretending that he has only four trunks to pack to quit Government House, he is nevertheless spreading his roots all over the place."

In another letter, C.R. unburdened himself: "It seems as if one cannot have peace as long as one lives. Who wants this governor-generalship or presidentship or deputy prime ministership or anything else? It will not do to be depressed. Otherwise, there is plenty of cause for being thoroughly disgusted with our semi-educated folk."

Patel replying to C.R. said: "With our notions of civil liberties and freedom of the press and many impediments in the way of corrective action, I am afraid it is impossible to reform *Blitz*." Rajendra Prasad, who was approached to contradict the *Blitz* report wrote to Patel that there was nothing for him in the report to contradict. "There is no allegation against me." He, however, issued a statement saying: "There is and there can be no question of any rivalry between Rajaji

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and myself for any post or honour. I would, therefore, warn the public not to be misled by any propaganda of this nature and request all not to indulge in it."

In a letter to Patel in September, 1949, Nehru said there was a deliberate move to keep Rajaji out of the Presidency. He mentioned the name of a newspaper owner and said he was "one of the most active agents in this business." In his reply, Patel said that a large majority seemed opposed to Rajaji. He agreed with Nehru that the newspaper owner mentioned by him was involved in it. "I do not know," Patel wrote, "when our people, particularly the press lords and the press will learn to behave with a sense of responsibility and to maintain the dignity of at least the higher offices. Instead, it seems that no person or position is sacred to them."

The whole controversy took an entirely different turn when Rajendra Prasad and Nehru fell out over the issue of presidentship and the former accused the latter of "ignoring him" and condemning him and "all that I have stood for and done during all these years in association with you (Nehru)". Nehru had suggested that Prasad should withdraw in favour of Rajaji. Upset by the tenor of Prasad's letter, Nehru asked Patel to deal with him. Patel wrote to Prasad pacifying him and Prasad apologised to Nehru and the incident was closed. In the event, Rajaji lost the battle and it was Prasad who won.

A speech by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, law minister, reported in the *National Herald* in April, 1948, caused concern to Nehru and Patel. According to the report, Ambedkar attacked the Congress Government and particularly Nehru and Patel. Nehru in a letter to Patel drew attention to passages in the speech "which seem very odd to me as coming from a Cabinet minister." Ambedkar in his reply to Nehru and Patel called the press report "perverted" and that "no fair-minded man could have any objection to anything I said in Lucknow." He said his speech was devoted to answering criticism from his followers on (1) why he had been silent ever since the departure of the Cabinet Mission ; (2) why he joined the Congress Government ; and (3) what he proposed to do in the future. He said in his speech there was no hostility to the

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Congress and there was no reference to any member of the government. "The press has never been kind to me. It has always done its best to twist facts and phrases, take them out of their context and pervert the sense of anything I have said. I fear this is what has happened to my speech in Lucknow." Referring to the report in the *National Herald*, he said the correspondent could not have distorted his speech in a manner worse than he had done. "I delivered my speech in Hindustani", he said, "which is not my mother tongue. It is, therefore, possible for misreporting and misrepresenting the intention of the speaker. Added to this the press in India has had its knife in me for the last 25 years. Consequently, deliberate perversion of my speeches by the press have occurred many a time."

There was one British journalist in India whose admiration for Patel bordered on hero worship. He was Ian Stephens, editor of the *Statesman*, who guided the destinies of the British-owned newspaper at a crucial period on the eve of India's independence and after. Campbell Johnson mentions in his book that the viceroy directed that Gandhi should be referred to in court circulars as "Mahatma Gandhi" instead of the usual "Mr Gandhi" after a representation by Stephens. Stephens quit his post as he did not approve of the government's acceptance of the accession of Kashmir to India and as he would have to attack the government on this ground. He believed that Kashmir should have gone to Pakistan and he moved over to Pakistan. He detested Nehru and admired Patel. "It is my belief", he wrote, "that Patel would have made a better prime minister. He and Rajagopalachari were the Congress party leaders I most admired....Both understood the nature of the Muslim problem in India better than Nehru did." Had Patel been chosen, Stephens said, he "would have stayed on contentedly in India longer than I did" because of the policies he believed Patel would have pursued. "Patel was a realist", Stephens said, "with down to earth understanding of how the masses felt. He wasn't half mesmerised by them as Nehru during his brilliant speeches seemed to be." Stephens said : "It's my belief that for his own earthy Hindu reasons

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Patel wouldn't—had he been prime minister in October, 1947—have seized Kashmir or anyhow in Nehru's or Mountbatten's way. He knew I admired him."

Stephens carried a special dispatch on Patel and his picture on his birthday in October, 1948 in the *Statesman* and also sent him a very affectionate message of greeting. "You are a great man on your public achievements alone", he said, "but also one who in my case at any rate, as I have ventured to mention more than once, inspires—whatever political differences there may be and some will doubtless recur—an unusual glow of personal affection. Prolonged good health and happiness to you."

Thanking him for the greetings and the dispatch in the paper about him, Patel wrote to Stephens : "During all our contacts I have appreciated your frankness as much as you did mine and that is largely responsible for the personal regard which both of us entertain for each other despite political differences which at times divide us. I need hardly assure you, therefore, that I have been deeply touched by the kindness and warmth of the reference about me both in your letter and the *Statesman's* dispatch." Stephens was overwhelmed by the prompt reply and sentiments in it and he wrote back : "Nowhere but in India, I think, do busy ministers and other leading men spare so much time and trouble for outside individuals. You should not have done it. But it was quite remarkably nice of you and I am grateful."

Patel was alert in taking action on disclosure made by the press regarding administration in the states. In December, 1947, the *Indian Nation* of Patna featured a report on its front page with banner headlines that the Governor of Bihar, Jairamdas Daulatram, had resigned because "he refuses to be a silent spectator of the Congress Ministry's misdeeds." The report said that the reason for his decision was that "under his very nose, His Excellency finds widespread corruption, favouritism and muddles and he finds that owing to the Congress Ministry's attitude refusing the governor to have his say, he has to be silent spectator of all misdeeds and bunglings of the ministry."

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The chief secretary to the Bihar Government in frantic telegrams to the prime minister and home minister said the government did not know the governor had resigned and for the reasons mentioned in the press report. He added : "Now as a version damaging the reputation of the Ministry has appeared in the press it is very necessary that the government here should know if it is a fact that he has resigned and that too for reasons mentioned in the report." Although Patel in his reply to the chief secretary said there was no truth in the press report regarding the governor's resignation and the reasons given, in a letter to Patel on December 23, the governor did request to be relieved early. Patel assured him that there would be no delay in relieving him.

Earlier in October in the same year there was another report about the Bihar Ministry in the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay. It alleged corruption and profiteering in regard to purchases of molasses under government permits : It said that molasses was bought at a cheap price and sold at 20 to 30 times more than the control price. In a letter to the Bihar Chief Minister, Sri Krishna Sinha, Patel said : "It is amazing that such a thing should have happened in such an unseemly fashion. If the evil is as extensive and as high placed . . . your government could have dealt with the matter drastically before it became public."

Almost the first thing the National Government did after assuming office was to set up a Press Laws Enquiry Committee which submitted its report in May, 1948. It favoured the abolition of laws specially concerning the press and the incorporation of their major provisions in the ordinary laws of the land. It supported the provisions in the Telegraph Act, Post Office Act and Sea Customs Act which provided for interception of messages and literature. It recommended the retention of the Official Secrets Act and the three sections of the Indian Penal Code, 124-A, 153-A, and 505 dealing with disaffection, communal hatred and tampering with the loyalty of the armed forces. The government brought in the Press (Objectionable Matters) Bill in 1951 to give effect to some of the recommendations of the committee. The Bill repealed the

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four Acts relating to the press suggested by the committee, It gave power to the government to demand and forfeit security from a newspaper or printing press after a judicial decision. It was provided that a complaint against a paper or printing press had to be made to the sessions judge who could, after a judicial enquiry with the help of a jury, demand security from the keeper of the press. On failure to deposit the security, the declaration under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, was to be deemed to be cancelled. What distinguished the Bill from the previous press laws was that the judiciary and not the executive was to decide on the necessity for action and the nature of action to be taken. It was explained that the Bill was intended to stop encouragement of violence and sabotage and certain other "grave offences" as also publication of matters of a scurrilous nature. Rajagopalachari, who as home minister, introduced the Bill in Parliament, said : "I wish to leave behind me a law that should comprise the essential donts for printed stuff. We cannot afford to let people's minds be poisoned." He hoped that the press would frame its own code of professional ethics and discipline and ask the government for statutory powers to execute its decisions.

N. Raghunathan made this bitter comment on the Bill : "The Britisher at his worst did not dream of consigning the press perpetually to the status of a prisoner on parole. It was left to the Mahatma's understudy to turn Rousseau's dictum upside down and say that the press was everywhere born in chains and in India it must continue to wear a good few of them for its own good. The luxury of a free press is not for us. Everyone of the home minister's specious pleas for muzzling the press was in an earlier day denounced by him and his fellow paladins as an affront to common sense and a sin against the light. The sabotage that the August patriots so easily reconciled with their non-violent consciences owed nothing to the instigation of the press ; still it did help them to climb to power. And is it not the most natural thing in the world to kick the ladder by which you rose ?" The Bill which became law was allowed to lapse in 1956.

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A Press Commission was appointed in September, 1952 under the chairmanship of Justice Rajadhyaksha. Its terms of reference included the state of the press, working conditions of journalists, freedom of the press and machinery for ensuring high standards of journalism. The commission, which submitted its report in 1954, recommended the establishment of a Press Council whose objects should be (1) to safeguard the freedom of the press and help the press to maintain its independence; (2) to censure objectionable types of journalistic conduct and by all other possible means to build up a code in accordance with the highest professional standards; (3) to keep under review any development likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance; (4) to encourage the growth of a sense of responsibility and of public service among those engaged in the profession of journalism; (5) to study the developments in the press which may tend towards concentration or monopoly and, if necessary, to suggest remedies therefore; (6) to publish reports, at least once a year, recording its work and reviewing the performance of the press, its development and the factors affecting them; (7) to improve methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession by the creation of suitable agencies for the purpose such as a Press Institute.

The commission recommended the appointment of a press registrar who would keep a close watch on the circulation of newspapers and if he came to the conclusion that in a particular area or language, a monopoly had developed he was to bring it to the notice of the Press Council who would conduct an investigation into the existence of a monopoly and what measures were necessary, if any, to meet the situation. It suggested the fixing of minimum basic wages for working journalists, introduction of price page schedule for newspapers and the diffusion of ownership. The commission found a considerable degree of concentration in the ownership of newspapers and warned of the danger that the tendency might develop in the future. The commission stated that outside the British-owned press, which had passed mostly into Indian hands, there were no hard and fast demarcations, no

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allocation of set duties. Most of the staff had been taken as sub-editors or reporters. Somewhere between editorial staff and the press, there were proof-readers. There was an editor and there were assistant editors. Affluence was rare for newspapers. It was remarkable, said the commission, that so many good men joined the profession, more remarkable that they stayed on showing considerable adaptability. However, the transformation of the newspaper into a business enterprise had begun and the new proprietors were businessmen who did much to straighten out finances. The commission noted the declining status of the editor in the daily newspapers and said that the "growing importance of the economics of production had also contributed to bring about the gradual eclipse of the editor by the manager." To reverse the trend it suggested that the editor be vested with administrative control over his staff, that appointments in the editorial department be made in consultation with him and that all members of the staff be made to realise that they were working "towards a common goal under the leadership of the editor."

The Press Council was established by an Act of Parliament in 1965. Its first president was Justice N. Rajagopala Iyengar, who said the council had a close likeness with the reconstituted British Press Council. It was, however, unique in having statutory authority. Its power to summon and enforce attendance of persons and examine them on oath ; to require the discovery and production of documents ; to receive evidence on affidavits ; and to issue commission for the examination of witnesses or documents were valuable aids in the conduct of investigations. Every inquiry held by the council was deemed to be a judicial proceeding and no suit or other legal proceedings lay against the council or its members in respect of anything done in good faith. The inclusion of members of Parliament on the council, said Rajagopala Iyengar, was a novel feature. The council had 28 members out of whom 20 were nominated by the various newspaper organisations.

The Working Journalists Act of 1955 recognised working journalists as industrial workers as recommended by the Press Commission and empowered the government to set up wage-

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board to fix the minimum wage for journalists. A wage board presided over by H.V. Divatia was appointed and its recommendations were published in May, 1957. The Supreme Court, however, in March, 1958 held the recommendations invalid as they were not based on consideration of capacity to pay. An ordinance was issued in June, 1958, setting up a committee of officials to remove the defects pointed out by the Supreme Court. The committee's report, published in December, 1958, was accepted by the government and its recommendations were passed into law. A press registrar was also appointed. The Newspaper (price and page) Act of 1956 which was passed in accordance with the press commission recommendations and whose object was to regulate prices charged for newspapers in relation to their maximum or minimum number of pages and for the space allotted for advertising matter in relation to their matters was held invalid by the Supreme Court. The court said imposing restrictions on the business aspect of a newspaper would amount to an infringement of the freedom of the press.

The Press Council Act was repealed in January, 1976, during the Emergency and the council was re-established under the Press Council Act of 1978. Some important changes were made in the new Act. A second Press Commission was set up in May, 1978, under the chairmanship of Justice P.C. Goswami but Justice Goswami and his colleagues on the commission resigned in January, 1980, with the formation of a new government. The commission was reconstituted in April 1980 under the chairmanship of Justice K.K. Mathew. Its terms of reference included: (1) the role of the press in a developing and democratic society; (2) the present constitutional guarantee with regard to freedom of speech and expression; whether this is adequate to ensure freedom of the press, adequacy and efficacy of the laws, rules and regulations for maintaining this freedom; (3) means of safeguarding the independence of the press against economic and political pressures from proprietors and management; (4) role of the press and the responsibilities it should assume in developmental policies; (5) ownership patterns, management practices and financial structures of the press; their relation

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to growth, editorial independence and professional integrity ; (6) chain newspapers ; links with industry, their effect on competition and on the readers' right to objective news and free comments ; (7) economics of the newspaper industry.

The commission, in its report submitted in 1982, said : "The role of the press in a developing and democratic society should neither be that of an adversary nor an ally of government. To be a mindless adversary or an unquestioning ally would be to abdicate judgment. A free press should be, in our view, a constructive critic." The commission felt that the editors should insist "on their right to have the final say in the acceptance or rejection of advertisements, specially those which border on or cross the line between decency and obscenity, legitimate claims for a product or service and the profferring of magical remedies." The editor's authority, it said, should extend not only to the contents of the advertisements but also to the proportion of space devoted to them. It wanted the discontinuance of astrological predictions in newspapers and magazines. It said that the positive role of the press of "bringing together the diverse elements in the nation's life by emphasising those aspects which tend towards unifying the communities is as important as avoidance of objectionable communal or casteist writing. This calls for a sustained campaign to promote the concept of human brotherhood." The commission said that while the press should bring to light and extend support to genuine public grievances, it should oppose unconstitutional methods of agitation. It welcomed the trend towards investigative reporting in so far as it was oriented to social and economic issues. "But the investigative reporter should not give occasion for the criticism of lack of follow-up which is a widespread failing in the Indian press."

The commission said that a newspaper was essentially a public utility and whatever be the precise form of ownership of newspapers, the exercise of ownership rights had to be subject to some measure of restraint and regulation. Public interest was the criterion that should regulate this activity. The commission said: "The press has a social responsibility and accountability to the public. The theory that the freedom

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of the press knows no restraints is gone." It said in the changed situation, the freedom of the issuer of news alone is not sufficient; the freedom of the consumer must also be protected. It warned that the press should be able to resist not only external pressure but also "inducements which would undermine its independence from within. Journalists should be on guard against the temptation to enjoy favours, whether from government authorities, employers, advertisers or others."

The commission declared that the Press Council, which had functioned for 15 years had "within limits set by the legislation done useful work" and it recommended that the institution should continue. It said the council should be given powers to deny facilities of accreditation for a specified period to those editors or journalists who had been held by the council thrice to have violated the accepted principles of journalistic ethics. Also, that a newspaper would invite "sanction if it comes to the adverse notice of the council thrice, whether by way of disapproval, warning, admonition or censure". The commission said: "We are of the view that it would not be desirable to draw up a code of ethics for newspapers. Such a code could be built up case by case over a period of time."

The commission said: "The Indian press is free, but does not have a wide enough reach and it has an urban and middle class base which limits its contribution towards making the development process more widely participatory." The commission recommended enactment of legislation to curb the influence of foreign money on the press. Under the law, it proposed newspapers would be required to submit their annual accounts to the Press Council giving details of the revenue obtained from advertisements and from foreign sources and names of the top 100 shareholders with their nationality and address. It recommended the amendment of the Press Council Act of 1978 to enable the council to review the quality and adequacy of training facilities for journalists and monitoring of the performance of newspapers by the council in respect of important issues.

The declaration of Emergency in June, 1975, by the government of Indira Gandhi came as a shocking blow to the Indian

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press which was its greatest victim. There was a raging controversy (and it has continued even to this day) whether Indira Gandhi was justified in imposing the Emergency but there was universal condemnation of the muzzling of the press and the drastic action taken against some newspapers. In a letter to a foreign friend in March, 1971, Indira Gandhi had this to say about the Indian press: "Our own press has done everything possible to mislead the public about me personally and about my aims and objectives. Even though everything they had said about my father earlier and then about me is being proved wrong all the time, the columnists continue with their supercilious analyses. The real trouble is that they have no depth or values themselves and do not care to have contact with the people. Their judgment is circumscribed by their own limited experience, so they try to fit people into preconceived and prejudiced forms. Neither my father nor I can fit into any of these."

Describing Indira Gandhi's attitude to the press, her former Press Adviser, B.G. Verghese said: "She is very shy of the press. At the beginning, I persuaded her to hold a press conference every month. But she gave up this practice after I left. She treats the press conferences as a necessary evil. Instead of using the press as a forum, she is very evasive in her answers and tries to disclose as little as possible. In the game of journalistic hide and seek, Indira Gandhi is usually the winner. Over the years she perfected a technique which enabled her to ward off inquisitive newsmen. She was always on guard with the press and unlike her father rarely allowed herself to be provoked into emotional outbursts. In the early years of prime ministership she was wont to lose her temper and lash out at pressmen who persisted in asking awkward questions. Since then her style had matured and she fielded questions with calm and good humoured self-confidence, silencing interrogators with humorous and cryptic retorts and sometimes turning inconvenient questions back at them.

"The Indian press and especially those controlled by the Opposition had been critical and even abusive about her. But while supporting suggestions that the newspaper industry

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should be separated from big business, she consistently rejected proposals for nationalising the press. She believed in a free press though she is not much influenced by it. Press criticism might annoy her temporarily but she soon cooled down."

The worst form of pre-censorship was imposed on the press during the Emergency and a paper of the standing of *The Hindu* had to scrap an editorial on the proclamation of the Emergency as the censor refused to permit editorials on the Emergency. The do's and don'ts of unimaginative and authoritarian censorship made it almost impossible for the press to function and even factual news and innocuous comments came under the axe. J.N. Sahni wrote: "In the absence of news, the newspapers filled their columns with such vital topics" as the origin of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the discovery of skull fossils of the ape man and the relative antiquity of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro."

Defending pre-censorship Indira Gandhi told an interviewer: "To have had to impose regulations on newspapers does not make me happy. But some journals had shed all objectivity and independence and allied themselves totally with the opposition front and done everything to spread doom and defeatism. The press was very much against us even before. Our newspapers are very much class oriented. . . . In today's world, it is absolutely essential to eradicate poverty to the greatest possible extent in order just to keep harmony. It can't be done immediately. It can't be done totally and it should be done as much as possible and yet as soon as we bend ourselves to this task and people see we are serious, the full weight of money, economic power, the press, industry, local and foreign combines. They don't say they are against the policy. Everybody says poverty is bad, nevertheless they want to obstruct our going ahead with programmes to eradicate it. Some of the press—here and abroad—are highlighting baseless charges of corruption. We have always looked into such matters and shall deal with them strictly."

The pre-censorship was imposed under Rule 48 of the Defence of India Rules "in order to maintain public order." It prohibited all categories of news, comment and rumour

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relating to the Emergency, to arrests and detentions unless pre-authorised in writing by an "authorised officer" from the Public Information Bureau in Delhi or by the director of information of a state government. Guidelines for the press which were issued said that "in the manner in which information is printed, published or disseminated, there can be an accretion of enormous strength to those who are posing a threat to internal security." The press was called upon for help "in the fulfilment of the primary task of ridding the nation of the causes of the Emergency; by suppressing news themselves through moderation, particularly in illustration and headlines; by publishing nothing to excite disaffection towards government established by law in India; nothing to promote feelings of enmity between different classes of persons in India or likely to cause the cessation or slowing down of work in any place, not anything objectionable already published in a foreign newspaper, nothing containing false allegations against leaders or denigrating the institution of prime minister; nothing to subvert the functioning of democratic institutions and nothing relating to agitations."

On July 26, 1975 editors received even more detailed instructions according to which "news was not to be published which contributes to the scare and demoralisation about the general situation or public interest in all respects as determined by the Central Government; nothing which will contribute even in a remote way to affect or worsen the law and order situation; nothing which is likely to convey the impression of protest or disapproval of governmental measures." These embargoes were extended to cartoons, letters to the editor and captions.

On December 8, 1975, three ordinances were issued banning the publication of "objectionable matter", abolishing the Press Council, and removing the freedom of the press to report proceedings of Parliament. The ordinance relating to publication of objectionable matter was made into a law on January 28, 1976. Among other things it prohibited "inciting any individual or class to disaffection, disharmony or ill-will or causing fear or alarm to any section of the public whereby

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any person may be induced to commit an offence against the state or public tranquillity." They included anything defamatory (whether by word or sign) of the president, vice-president, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, state governors, the prime minister and all members of the Cabinet of Central and state governments or deemed to be so by them. The law gave wide powers of search and seizure to the police and other petty officials. It provided for the forfeiture of securities of press deposits as safeguard against "objectionable writing". The Press Council was abolished, it was stated, because it had "failed to curb tendentious and provocative writing."

How did the press react to these draconian laws ? According to Sahni: "The year 1976 will be specially remembered for a progressive voluntary blackout by the press and a weakened submission by many editors to proprietors and to the establishment in a conspiracy of suppression. What was painful was that the readers did not show lack of interest in the stuff they read and were least concerned about the adulterated food they were being provided with. . . . While a lot will need to be written to explain the voluntary collapse, one may say that all along money has won and the conscience of the pen has lost. Reporters see things but the pen does not see. Editors know things but look ignorant. One cannot remember such transition in the behaviour and attitude of the press anywhere, at any time, so willingly and voluntarily achieved . . . . There have been in the past repression, suppression and brain washing but never a voluntary collapse of the mind, the desire to do more to suppress or eliminate than even demanded, the refusal to stretch censorship even to the end of the permitted teacher. In the long run, people will say, as of the daily meteorological forecasts, what the press publishes is not in accord with what happens." Sahni was bitter that "today most editors are loyal to the establishment as also to the tycoons who control the purse strings. So what we get as a result is a synthetic form of 'popular' opinion, an amalgam of conformism mixed with self-interest of the controlling tycoons."

However, there was at least one newspaper which fought

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grimly and with determination the assault on the press and became the special target of persecution, and vindictiveness. The *Indian Express*, with its proprietor Ramnath Goenka and editor, V.K. Narasimham wrote a glorious chapter in the battle for the freedom of the press and when the nightmare ended and the press became free again, they were hailed as heroes. All the restrictions on the press were removed when the Janata Government came to power in 1977 and the Indian press once again breathed freedom, never again to lose it. In the words of Justice Grover, president of the Press Council, "The Indian press today is as free as in any other free country in the world "

The freedom of the press is guaranteed in Article 19 (1) of the Constitution which protects freedom of speech and expression. Although the guarantee is not in the same language as in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States where press freedom is specifically mentioned, the Supreme Court of India has held that the freedom of the press is included in the concept of freedom of speech and expression. In 1951, the Constitution Act (First Amendment) provided for reasonable restrictions being imposed on the exercise of press freedom in the interest of the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. By the Constitution Act of 1963 (16th Amendment), the words "sovereignty and integrity of India" were inserted before the words "security of the state."

In the case *Express* Newspapers Vs Union of India the Supreme Court held that freedom of the press was an essential part of the right of freedom of speech and expression. The court also observed in that case that the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution was based on the provisions of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the U.S.A. In another case, Romesh Thapar Vs the State of Madras, the Supreme Court held that the freedom of speech and expression included freedom of propagation of ideas and that freedom was ensured by the freedom of circulation. In Brij Bhushan Vs the State

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of Delhi the court said that the imposition of pre-censorship on a journal was a restriction on the liberty of the press which was an essential part of the right to freedom of speech and expression declared by Article 19 (1) (a).

The Press Commission said the expression "freedom of the press" carried different meanings to different people. Some people stressed the freedom of the editor to decide what should be published in the paper. Some others emphasised the right of the owners to market their publications. The commission said; "The press as a medium of communication is a modern phenomenon. It has immense power to advance or thwart the progress of civilisation. Its freedom can be used to create a brave new world or to bring about universal catastrophe." The commission pointed out that a citizen was entirely dependent on the press for the quality, proportion and extent of the news supply. In such a situation, the exclusive and continuous advocacy of one point of view through the medium of a newspaper which held a monopolistic position was not conducive to the formation of healthy public opinion. "The assumption in a democratic set up is", the commission said, "that the freedom of the press will produce a sufficiently diverse press not only to satisfy the public interest by throwing up a broad spectrum of views but also to fulfil the individual interest by enabling virtually everyone with a distinctive opinion to find some place to express it."

The commission noted that with the revolution in communication technology on the one hand and the newspapers' development of an antipathy to ideas which were opposed to their commercial interest on the other, the operation of a market place of ideas had ceased to exist. "The constitutional issue generally is whether the expression already uttered should be given the shelter of Article 19 (1) (a)."

But what of those ideas which are unacceptable to the media and which do not find access therein? The usual answer is that Article 19 (1) (a) guarantees freedom of the owner to do as he chooses with his media. This answer stressed the view that a newspaper is emphatically the private property of the owner who sells a manufactured product at his risk; a

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newspaper owes nothing to the public which grants it no franchise. Thus, the constitutional imperative of free expression becomes the very instrument for repressing competitive ideas. The freedom guaranteed by Article 19 (1) (a) must be reviewed in this light." The commission said a realistic view of Article 19 (1)(a) "has to recognise that the right to expression is somewhat thin if it can be exercised only at the sufferance of the managers of mass communication." "Self-censorship by the press", it said, "is practically as great a menace to the freedom of expression as government censorship. The whole point of a free press is that ideas deserving public hearing and the decision as to which ideas deserve that hearing shall not rest solely within the editors and owners. . . . The widest possible dissemination of information from as many diverse and antagonistic sources, as could be ensured, alone will secure public welfare and the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and expression rests on this postulate. Article 19 (1) (a) does not sanction repression of that freedom by private interests including the press."

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12

LANGUAGE LEADERS

Hindi and Urdu

The Indian language press has played a historic and memorable role not only in the development of Indian journalism but also in the struggle for freedom. From its beginnings in the early years of the 19th century, it had been the vicious target of the British rulers who employed every means at their disposal to crush it and to make it impossible for it to function. They were willing to tolerate the Indian-owned and edited English press up to a point but not the language press, for they believed it was much more dangerous for the perpetuation of their rule. Their argument was that the educated Indians who read the English newspapers were less likely to be misled and better able to appreciate the benefits of British rule than the illiterate masses who were influenced by the language press which indulged in provocative and seditious writings. Their repressive legislation against the press was, therefore, directed much more against the language papers and the most famous example is Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878. Some of the enlightened Indian journalists too, were not happy with the language press. G. Subramania Aiyer, editor of *The Hindu*, said in 1897: "The vernacular press, as it is called, are in the hands of an inferior set of men. It must be confessed that these men, not possessing sufficient education, often commit errors. It must be noticed that the vernacular languages are not quite suited to the discussion of public questions. . . . Those gentlemen who conduct the vernacular press are often at a loss to find suitable words to express themselves and as is often the case with people that want to express their feelings, they resort to exaggeration or hyperbole without meaning the slightest offence by the language

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they make use." *The Hindu*, on one occasion, urged the language press, especially in Bengal, to exercise caution and restraint. "As we feared, the insane writings of some of the vernacular journals of Bengal have placed a weapon in the hands of the enemies of Indian progress which we may be sure will be wielded with all the adroitness and effect of practised detractors. It will be quite out of harmony with the instincts of demoralised and partisan journalism if the recent excited writings of the Bengali press be not converted into political capital as they have actually been done by the *Englishman*, the *Pioneer* and the Calcutta correspondent of the *Times*."

The language press in the early years was concentrated in Calcutta and Bombay where it flourished and waged relentless battles on two fronts: social reform and political progress. With the advent of Gandhi on the Indian political scene and his non-violent non-cooperation movement, language papers sprang up all over the country and they gave a fillip and moral strength to the movement for freedom which found its echoes in every nook and corner of the country. Ill-equipped and with poor resources they managed to survive the onslaught and persecution of the alien rulers for over three decades and many of them fell on the wayside after writing a glorious chapter in the history of the freedom struggle during their brief existence. Many were the acts of courage and patriotism and sacrifice by the men who conducted these papers and their staff. They were dedicated to a cause and nothing could stop them from completing their mission. They endured privation and penury and even suffered imprisonment and when the goal was reached, when freedom came, many of them were not there to enjoy the fruits of a hard-won battle but their spirits must have hovered over the battlements where they fought and sacrificed their lives to shed tears of joy. The contribution of Hindi and Urdu journalism to the struggle for freedom and the political awakening of the masses is immense.

In the initial phase the Hindi press was concerned almost solely with social and religious questions and there was

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much involvement in political affairs. Attention was focused on ridding Hindu society of social evils like sati, child marriage and untouchability, and also on education. When racial discrimination became rampant and the grievances of the people against the alien rulers multiplied, the Hindi press began to switch over to political questions which culminated in the demand for self-government. The earliest Hindi newspaper was started in Calcutta in 1826. It was a weekly, *Oodunt Martand.* Its editor, Jooghul Kishore Sookool, faced many difficulties in running it. He needed postal facilities to dispatch it to readers outside Bengal and the government when approached refused to grant him postal concessions. He was unable to face the high postal rates and had to close down the paper within a year. Sookool made an attempt to start another paper in 1850 called *Samyadani Martand* but this also failed. The *Banga Doot*, sponsored among others by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Dwaraka Prasad Thakore appeared in 1829. It was also published in English, Bengali and Persian. Nilratan Haldar was its editor. The *Prajamitra* was the third Hindi journal to appear in Calcutta.

The First Hindi daily, *Samachar Subha Varshan*, came out in 1854 and Shyam Sundar Sen was its editor. Between 1850 and 1857, there were a number of Hindi newspapers which made good. Among them were the *Benaras Akbar*, *Sudhakar*, *Tathwa Bodhini*, *Patrika* and *Sathya*. *Sudhakar* under the editorship of Tara Mohan Mitra, a Bengali, was notable for its sustained campaign against the activities of the missionaries in India. A literary magazine which set the standard for Hindi journals in the early years of the century was *Saraswathi*, a monthly, edited by Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi. It standardised the style and pattern of Hindi journalism and developed literary criticism and book reviews. It became the torch-bearer for later day Hindi journalists who cultivated its style in prose and poetry. The World War of 1914 saw the birth of many Hindi dailies in Bombay, Calcutta and Patna. The more prominent among them were *Sri Venkateshwar Samachar*, *Bharat Mitra*, and *Calcutta Samachar*. *Bharat Mitra*, published from Calcutta became the leading Hindi newspaper of the

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time under the dynamic stewardship of its early editors, Balmukand Gupta and Ambika Prasad Bajpai. *Viswamitra*, which was started after the *Calcutta Samachar* became defunct, offered serious competition to *Bharat Mitra* from 1918. Hindi journalism made rapid progress during the war period and many outstanding journalists came to the fore including Ganga Prasad Gupta, Nanda Kumar Deo Dharma, M.P. Dwivedi, Hari Krishna Jouhar, Chhote Ram Shukla, Indra Vidyavachaspati, Shiv Ram Pandey, Lakshminarayan Garde and Narmada Prasad Misra.

In 1920, the *Aj* was started in Banaras and it was to play a very notable part in the freedom struggle. Its first editor was Sri Prakasa, a great freedom fighter who occupied positions of power and prestige in free India. He was assisted by Babu Rao Vishnu Pararkar whose contribution to the development of Hindi journalism was considerable. The *Aj*, which was a half anna paper became a national institution and its admirers compared it to the *Times* of London. Espousing the national cause and waging a never ending battle with the alien rulers, the *Aj* was a bulwark of the Indian National Congress and its main forum to spread the message of freedom to the Hindi-speaking masses of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Nepal. It set the tone and style for Hindi journalism and was acclaimed for its impartial and objective reporting and illuminating and fearless editorials. A balanced blending of national and international news was one of its strong features.

In Patna the *Desh*, a weekly, was an influential journal and the mouthpiece of the Congress. It was founded by Babu Rajendra Prasad and his friends in 1920 and proved a valuable medium for nationalist propaganda. But it was not a profitable venture and began to incur losses. Referring to it, Rajendra Prasad said: "We started getting quite a number of advertisements but the manager had made the mistake of gradually reducing the advertisement rates with the result that as the circulation went on rising, our losses kept pace .... When the non-cooperation movement ended, the circulation fell and eventually we closed it down."

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In 1924 there were 102 Hindi newspapers and of them four were dailies (*Aj*, Banaras) *Swatantra*, Calcutta, *Arjun*, Delhi and *Calcutta Samachar*, Calcutta). According to one historian, until 1926, Hindi dailies were not financially successful. "Their get up and printing was poor, the reading material not quite up to the mark and the editorials unwieldy and lengthy. The weeklies were better edited and got up." Among the well-known better produced weeklies were *Bhavishya* (Kanpur), *Karmaveer* (Khandwa) and *Sainik* (Agra). Among the important Hindi dailies which flourished in 1930 were: *Visvamitra* and *Bharat Mitra* (Calcutta), *Savadhin Bharat* (Bombay), *Lokmat* (Jabalpur), *Vartman* (Kanpur), *Milap* (Lahore) besides *Aj* (Banaras), *Arjun* (Delhi) and *Lokmanya* (Calcutta).

As freedom came to India, one of the important Hindi dailies to greet it from the capital was *Hindustan*, sister newspaper of the *Hindustan Times*, started in 1936. The *Hindustan Times*, as we have already seen, is one of the great nationalist English dailies which suffered and sacrificed in the cause of freedom. Wide news coverage and a variety of special features marked the *Hindustan*. The confidence and goodwill reposed in this organ of public opinion, wrote an admirer, "is unique. Pursuing a vigorous but dignified editorial policy, it is held in esteem by the Hindi newspaper reading public who seek the news of the day reported faithfully and fearlessly. Its high circulation figure testifies to its popularity." Started in 1940, *Aryavart* of Patna is a sister publication of the *Indian Nation* and enjoys considerable influence.

The *Nav Bharat Times* of the *Times of India* group started in Delhi in 1950, is today the largest circulated Hindi daily. According to the registrar of newspapers its circulation in 1983 was 2,98,966. It is also published from Bombay. It is popular for its coverage of national and international news and views and comments on domestic affairs. The *Amrita Patrika* of Allahabad is another notable Hindi daily which is well-known for its trenchant editorials. In Madhya Pradesh, *Nav Bharat* published from Jabalpur, Nagpur, Bhopal, Raipur and Indore is widely circulated and popular. The best in Hindi journalism is seen in the periodicals which are better got up, cheaper and

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more popular. "They are the stronghold of Hindi journalism", according to one writer. *Ravivar*, Hindi weekly of the *Sunday* group, has as much influence as its better known sister journal, *Sunday*. The Hindi *Blitz* (Bombay) has almost overtaken the circulation of the English edition.

Even as far back as 1964, Hindi had the largest number of newspapers among language papers with 149 dailies, 726 weeklies and other kinds of periodicals. The main centres of publication were in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Delhi. Today, as we have already noted, Hindi journalism has overtaken the English press in terms of circulation and number and it has also taken on a national character like the English dailies. "At the national level", says a writer, "the impact of the Hindi press is beginning to rival that of the major English language weeklies." In 1980, Hindi dailies were being published from 11 states and two Union Territories compared to 16 states and three Union Territories which have English dailies. According to the registrar of newspapers, Hindi newspapers registered an annual growth of 6.3 per cent from 1981 (from 5329 in 1981 to 5655 in 1982). The largest number of Hindi papers came from Uttar Pradesh in 1982 with 2052, and other states which accounted for 10 per cent of their number are Rajasthan, Delhi, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. There were 13 big dailies in 1983. The oldest surviving Hindi newspaper as mentioned in *Press in India, 1984* is *Jain Gazette*, a weekly published from Lucknow and started in 1895.

Ths Urdu press in India today is the fourth largest numerical group, Delhi's earliest Urdu newspapers, *Fawaid-ul-Nazarin* and *Kiran-us-Sadai* (1852) were edited by a Christian convert, Rama Chandra. The *Fawaid-ul-Nazarin* was aimed at the general reader while the other journal published articles on scientific subjects. While the Delhi Municipal administration was the target of English newspapers like the *Moffusilite* which highlighted the growing incidence of thefts and the prevailing sense of insecurity in the "dark city of Delhi", the Urdu papers did not have the courage to be critical until the 1870s. They harked back to the glorious days of the past and wanted

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that the new fangled system of local government should show some results. The *Urdu Akhbar*, edited by Syed Hasan, drew attention to the need to correct "many abuses and irregularities", including drainage, disposal of filth, checking adulteration and controlling noxious trades. The proliferation of Urdu journals in Delhi during this period, owned by Hindus as well as Muslims, indicated that Urdu was still very much the popular language. A language controversy broke out in 1884 in the Delhi press. Three statements were issued supporting Urdu as against Hindi. One of these had a majority of Hindu signatories, another largely Muslim and the signatories in the third came largely from outside the city. The local newspapers were solidly behind Urdu.

In the 1860s, there were six Urdu papers published from Delhi and they were all owned by loyalists. The most enduring of these was the *Akmal-ul-Akbar* published by Hakim Abdul Majid Khan. By the 1880s, there were more than 12 newspapers, many owned by those who were critical of the establishment. In 1877, Maulvi Nasir Ali, one of the founders of the Anjuman Islamia, edited three newspapers, *Nusrat-ul-Akbar*, *Nusrat-ul-Islam* and *Mihir-e-Darakhshan*. They were described as having "helped to create an interest in current affairs among Muslims." Besides Delhi, Urdu newspapers were also published from Meerut, Agra, Lucknow, Aligarh and Lahore. They were mostly weeklies or fortnightlies and were moderate in their views on political and religious questions.

A notable Urdu journal in the first decade of this century was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *Al Hilal* which came out from Calcutta in 1912. Referring to *Al Hilal* in his autobiography, Azad writes: "There were a number of dailies, weeklies and monthlies published in Urdu from the Punjab and U.P. but their standard was not high. Their get up and printing were as poor as their contents. They were produced by the lithographic process and could not, therefore, embody any feature of modern journalism. Nor were they able to print half tone pictures. I decided my journal should be attractive in get up and powerful in appeal."

Al Hilal marked a turning point in the history of Urdu

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journalism. It achieved unprecedented popularity within a short time. "The public", wrote Azad, "were attracted not only by the superior printing and production of the paper but even more by the new note of nationalism preached by it. *Al Hilal* created a revolutionary stir among the masses. The demand for it was so great that within the first three months all the old issues had to be reprinted as every new subscriber wanted the entire set. Within two years, *Al Hilal* reached a circulation of 26,000 copies a week, a figure which was till then unheard of in Urdu journalism." The government was rattled by the popularity of the journal and demanded a security of Rs. 2,000 under the Press Act from the publisher. This deposit was forfeited and a fresh deposit of Rs. 10,000 was demanded within a few months. This was also forfeited after some time and the *Al Hilal* press was confiscated in 1915. After five months, Azad started a new press Al Balagh and brought out a journal under that name. Azad was externed from Calcutta under the Defence of India Regulations. Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bombay had already put a ban on his entry into their territories. Azad went to Bihar and he was interned in Ranchi. He was released in 1920 and that was the end of his journalistic career. Azad plunged into the national struggle and became one of India's great freedom fighters occupying positions of power and prestige in the Congress and government, before and after independence.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "Abul Kalam Azad spoke in a new language to Muslims in his weekly *Al Hilal*. It was not only a new language in thought and approach, even its texture was different for Azad's style was tense and virile, though sometimes a little difficult because of its Persian background. He used new phrases for new ideas and was a definite influence in giving shape to the Urdu language as it is today. The older conservative leaders among the Muslims did not react favourably to all this and criticised Azad's opinions and approach. Yet not even the most learned of them could easily match Azad in debate and argument even on the basis of scripture and old tradition, for Azad's knowledge of these happened to be greater than theirs. He was a strange mixture of medieval scholasticism, eighteenth century rationalism, 19th

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the modern outlook .... This very youthful writer and journalist caused a sensation in Muslim intellectual circles and though the elders frowned upon him, his words created a ferment in the minds of the younger generation."

Urdu nationalist papers had their share of persecution at the hands of the alien rulers during the freedom struggle and there were many who made great sacrifices in the patriotic movements. One of them was *Milap* of Lahore, a daily started in 1923 by the Arya Samaj. Its powerful editorials espousing the cause of freedom provoked the British rulers who demanded securities from it only to forfeit the deposits as often as they were demanded. On one occasion its Editor, Gauri Shanker, was arrested and its Managing Editor, Ranbir, was involved in many legal actions against the paper. In the partition riots of 1947, mobs raided the office of the paper and paper stocks and machinery were set on fire. Ranbir was stabbed. The paper did not appear for six weeks. It later shifted to Delhi.

Another Urdu daily which suffered for its part in the freedom movement was *Pratap* of Lahore, started by Mahshe Krishan in 1919. It vigorously supported Gandhi's policies and the Congress objective. It was a victim of government harassment and was forced to furnish securities at frequent intervals which were forfeited. Between 1919 and 1936, the paper suspended publication many times. It also shifted to Delhi after the partition. It had great influence among the Urdu-reading Hindus in Punjab, U.P. and Delhi.

A prominent Urdu daily in Delhi in 1923 was the *Tej*, founded by Swami Shradhanand. Its first editor was Lala Deshbandu Gupta, a leading Congressman. It had a wide circulation in U.P., Rajasthan and Punjab. It faced government wrath many times and had to pay the penalty by having its copies confiscated on a number of occasions. It was banned in a number of native states.

Today, Urdu journalism has assumed an all-India character coming next to English and Hindi in a number of states and Union Territories from which it is being published. One of its strongholds is Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh. The

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total number of Urdu newspapers increased from 1299 in 1981 to 1330 in 1982. There are 134 dailies, 654 weeklies and other fortnightly and monthly periodicals. Of the dailies, 22 are from Jammu and Kashmir, 17 each from Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, 15 from U.P. and 13 each from Maharashtra and Punjab. *Shama*, a monthly from Delhi, is the only Urdu journal with more than one lakh circulation. The oldest Urdu newspaper is the daily, *Musheer-e-Deccan* (1884) published from Hyderabad.

Bengali

To Bengal goes the credit of pioneering language journalism in India and it has also the enviable record of facing the worst repression and persecution at the hands of the alien rulers. Some of the greatest journalists of India were born in Bengal and their pioneering work has contributed to the stability and growth of Indian journalism. We have referred in a previous chapter to the lead given by Surendranath Bannerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose through their newspapers as sentinels of Indian nationalism. The Bengali press was a terror to the British administration and all the drastic press laws were particularly aimed against them. It had powerful editors and writers who reached out to the masses in the distant villages with their clarion call to fight against injustice, racial prejudice and maladministration. They were the earliest to demand self-Government and assail the Moderate leaders of the nationalist movement with timidity and lack of courage to demand what was the birthright of Indians. The early Bengali papers took up the cause of the oppressed workers in the indigo plantations, and of the peasants. Notable among them were the *Shome Prakash*, the *Grambartha Prakashika* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (before it became an English weekly). They created problems for the government with their exposure of the exploitation of labour in plantations and on the fields, and violent denunciation of the European planters and the government. In the course of this campaign, a number of newspapers were started in villages and districts. The press and machinery used to print them were of the crudest type and the

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publisher and editor conducted the journals almost as family business. Many Bengali journals were run by students fresh from college and the government was reluctant to take action against them for their writings as they did not want to invite the ridicule that they were annoyed by young students.

The Bengali press suffered most in the reprisals launched by the government after the Mutiny in 1857. Two against whom action was taken under the new Press Act were *Durbeen and Simachur Soodha Bursun* (Bengali and Hindi). The latter had published a report which said among other things that the governor-general went to Dum Dum and Barrackpore to "salaam the sepoys there and speak to them sweetly." It was remarked by a writer of the time that "Bengali newspapers prefaced their vituperative attacks on government with effusions of loyalty to the queen and the British Government since section 124-A (sedition) of the I.P.C. excluded the writings of persons whose loyalty to the government was undoubted." A survey of the Indian language press by Sir George Campbell in 1876 showed that half of the total number of 38 newspapers were published from Calcutta.

We have already mentioned in a previous chapter that the earliest Bengali journal was *Samachar Darpan* (1818) started by missionaries Carey and Marshman at Serampore. It began as a monthly but it proved so popular that it was converted into a weekly. The first issue came out on May 23, 1818. It carried both Indian and foreign news. It became bilingual in 1829 carrying English and Bengali news in parallel columns. After surviving a number of crises, it finally closed down in 1852. Ram Mohun Roy's *Sambad Kaumudi* was started in 1821 (as already mentioned) but did not live long. In 1831, Iswar Chandra Gupta started a Bengali daily, *Sambad Prabhakar*, and it was followed by the *Thathwa Bodhini* of Akshaya Kumar Datta in 1843. Other newspapers of this period were: *Vividhartha Sangrah* (1851), *Masik Patra* (1854) and *Som Prakash* (1851). The *Sulava Samachar* of the Indian Reform Association was started in 1870 by Keshub Chandra Sen. A weekly, it was sold at one pice per copy. It had a circulation of 3,500 copies and was the most popular weekly of the period.

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Another journal which was also popular was the *Haishakar Patrika* edited by Babu Kisari Mohan Ganguli. The first newspaper to espouse the cause of the working class, *Bharat Shramajili*, was started as a weekly at about this time. A literary journal, which was greatly popular, was that of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and it was called *Banga Dharshan*. The first Bengali daily to adopt modern methods of production was the *Basumati* (1880) which was edited by Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya. We have already noticed two famous Bengali newspapers, the *Bengalee* of Surendranath Bannerjee and *Bande Mataram* of B.C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghose. The editor of *Bengalee* faced contempt of court proceedings and imprisonment when it voiced public indignation in 1883 against a High Court judge who ordered Hindu idols to be produced in court as evidence. The paper which became a daily in 1900 was the first language paper to subscribe to Reuter's foreign news service. Through the *Bande Mataram*, Aurobindo Ghose proclaimed his philosophy and the "new Path" which meant passive resistance as an instrument of political action. An associate of the *Bengalee* was the *Nayak* (1908), published by Panch Cowrie Bannerjee. In 1922 came the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, sponsored by Mrinal Kanti Ghosh, Prafulla Kumar Sarkar and Suresh Chandra Majumdar. It is today the largest circulated language daily in the country and with its English counterpart, *Hindustan Standard*, it played a glorious role in the freedom movement. Another daily *Jugantar*, the second largest circulated language daily in India, was started in 1937 by the management of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. After Gandhi took over the leadership of the national movement, the *Bangalee* and *Nayak* which were the organs of the Moderates, lost ground rapidly in spite of official support because of the tremendous pressure exerted by C.R. Das who was the undisputed Congress leader in Bengal.

Bengali papers suffered somewhat after the partition in 1947 because they lost a good slice of their readers in the new East Pakistan. Notable newspapers started after 1947 include *Loksevak* (1948) and *Jansevak* owned by the Congress leader, Atulya Ghosh.

The most well-known editor of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, which produces more than eight editions daily is Chapala
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Kanta Bhattacharya, who is also a former president of the All-India Newspaper Editors Conference. Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, who started the *Basumati* in 1914, is another well-known name in Bengali journalism. He was a member of the Editors' delegation which visited the war front in 1918. He has the distinction of being a pioneer in establishing an exclusive news service for his paper. Vivekhananda Mukherjee is one of the great editors of *Jugantar*. It is stated that more than 90 per cent of educated Bengalis read language papers. The Bengali press today is the third largest numerical group after Hindi and English. There were 1537 newspapers in 1982 compared to 1463 in the previous year. Of them, 43 are dailies and 403 weeklies. A significant point is that 91.9 per cent of Bengali newspapers are published from West Bengal. Two dailies have a circulation of more than a lakh each. Among the periodicals, *Desh* published from Calcutta had the largest circulation in 1982 with 95,538 copies. The oldest papers are: *Murshidabad Hiteshi*, a weekly (1893) and *Chinauria Bartabha*, a weekly, (1893).

Malayalam

Malayalam journalism has produced two outstanding journalists in K.C. Mammen Mappilai, editor of *Malayala Manorama* and K.P. Kesava Menon, editor of *Mathrubhumi*. Today, long after these two giants had left the scene, the *Malayala Manorama* and *Mathrubhumi* continue to dominate Malayalam journalism. While *Malayala Manorama* has four years to complete 100 years, the *Mathrubhumi*, child of the non-cooperation movement, and the struggle for freedom, is 63 years old. *Malayala Manorama* was not only involved in the freedom struggle but also fought against autocracy in a princely state and paid for it with suspension of publication for nine long years. The long line of editors of *Mathrubhumi* were dedicated soldiers of freedom and like other patriotic Indians went through the ordeal and made sacrifices.

The proud proprietors of *Malayala Manorama* say: "The story of *Manorama* is not just a story. . . . It is a saga, a saga

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running through four generations, a saga of nativity, exile, martyrdom and resurrection. And more. A record of significant achievements." *Malayala Manorama* was started as a weekly in Kottayam in the princely state of Travancore in 1890. It was founded by Kandathil Verughese Mappillai, who was a talented writer with high ideals and a pioneer in various fields. The great majority of the people of the state were illiterate and there were hardly any newspapers then. It became the mission of *Malayala Manorama* to campaign for the uplift of the depressed classes, spread of education, eradication of superstitious beliefs and practices, and political justice for all. The first editorial was a plea for the education of the Pulayas, a downtrodden community of Kerala.

K.C. Mammen Mappilai took over as editor after the death of his father in 1904 and he wrote a new chapter in the history of Malayalam journalism with his courageous advocacy of the rights of the people in the face of autocratic rule. He has been described as a "fearless patriot, a wise teacher, a crusading editor and a zealous reformer." He agitated for great causes and these included the Civil Rights movement, the agitation for Responsible Government and social reform. The paper antagonised the state administration when it actively supported the "abstention movement" for the redistribution of legislature constituencies to ensure equitable representation for all sections of the people. Its offence was aggravated when it wholeheartedly backed the State Congress' movement for Responsible Government. The *Malayala Manorama* was banned by the state administration in 1938 and its press confiscated. The paper, which had been converted into a daily in 1928, came out from Cochin for a few days but it could not be sustained and had to close down. It did not reappear until November, 1947 after the advent of freedom and the introduction of Responsible Government in Travancore. In the meantime, Editor Mammen Mappilai had been prosecuted and imprisoned in connection with the liquidation of the Travancore National Bank with which he was connected. He resumed his editorship in 1947 and was succeeded on his death by his son, K.M. Cherian in 1954. The present editor is K.M. Mathew, his brother.

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Malayala Manorama, which is being published from Kottayam, Cochin and Calicut, is today the largest circulated Malayalam daily in Kerala and the third biggest language daily in India. It has adopted the most modern technology in the production of the newspaper and its allied journals. The *Malayala Manorama* weekly is the largest circulated language weekly in India. It is claimed by its proprietors that almost 60 per cent of the affluent and educated adults in Kerala read it and that it has more readers per copy than any of the other dailies.

Mathrubhumi was launched from Calicut in 1923 as an organ of the Indian National Congress, which had launched the non-cooperation movement under Gandhi's leadership. Its sponsors included K. Madhavan Nair, Kurur Neelakantan Nambudripad and K.P. Kesava Menon. Kesava Menon was the editor and he made the paper a spokesman of the forces fighting for freedom. From its inception it became popular but it had to pass through many ups and downs during its stormy career. When Kesava Menon courted imprisonment in the Vaikom *Satyagraha* his place was taken by P. Ramunni Menon who dedicated his life to the paper. Unfortunately, his premature death in 1930 brought to an end the services of a stalwart. It was also the year when the *Mathrubhumi*, which had until then been a weekly, became a daily. Very soon an illustrated weekly came out from its press and its progress was rapid. It was one of the earliest to introduce the teleprinter service and buy a rotary press and in 1962 it started its Cochin edition. *Mathrubhumi* under the dynamic leadership of Kesava Menon played a memorable role in the freedom struggle and did much to spread the ideals of Gandhi and the Congress. Today it is the second most popular Malayalam daily in Kerala next only to *Malayala Manorama*.

A third newspaper which also has a good circulation in Kerala today is the *Kerala Kaumidi* published from Trivandrum. It was founded in 1910 by K. Sukumaran as a daily. It supported the then Government and was patronised by officials and pro-Government sections of the public.

The earliest Malayalam newspaper was published from Kottayam in 1840 and it was called *Vignyana Nikshepam*.

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Another early paper was *Paschima Tharika* of Cochin (1862). A well-known name in Malayalam journalism is that of K. Ramakrishna Pillai, who first through his *Kerala*, a monthly, and later *Malayalee*, a weekly, left an indelible impress on Malayali writing. An admirer has written of him: His honesty and candour and lucidity in expression made him one of the finest of Malayalam writers. His writings were so powerful and swayed the masses whom he wanted to make politically conscious that the authorities ordered his deportation from Travancore in 1910. He died six years later. Another notable journalist in the closing years of the last century was C. Kunhirama Menon who edited the *Kerala Patrika*, a political journal from Calicut in 1884. He was fearless in his criticism of the administration for its lapses and his journal was widely patronised by eminent public men and writers.

In the 1920s there were many Malayalam dailies besides the ones we have mentioned which were popular. Among them were *Malayalam* (Quilon), *Deenabandhu* (Ernakulam), *Janayugam* (Quilon), *Kerala Janatha* (Trivandrum and *Deshabhimani* (Calicut).

Malayalam journalism produced a galaxy of writers from its very beginning. Some of the distinguished writers who gained literary reputation through their contribution to *Malayala Manorama* included: Kerala Varma, Valia Koyil Thampuran, Kunhittan Thampuran, Vallathol Menon, Ulloor Achutha Menon and M. Kumaran. K.M. Panikkar made a great contribution to the growth of Malayalam journalism as a writer, critic and historian. The Second Press Commission reported that in the circulation of dailies per 1000 of literate population, Kerala with 63.80 copies was at the top. The commission also found that among the Indian languages, Malayalam had the maximum circulation of weeklies as well as of other periodicals per 1000 of the linguistic population. In 1979, Malayalam had 51.4 copies of weeklies and an equal number of copies of other periodicals circulating per 1000 of the linguistic population.

According to statistics published by the registrar of newspapers in 1984, in 1983 there were 103 Malayalam dailies, 100 bi-weeklies, 120 weeklies and 103 fortnightlies besides monthlies

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and quarterlies, making up a total of 802. Many were published from outside Kerala from centres in Maharashtra (9), Tamil Nadu (6), Karnataka (5), Delhi (4), West Bengal (2) and Andhra Pradesh (2). Within Kerala itself, the publishing centres include Trivandrum, Cochin, Kottayam, Quilon, Allepey, and Calicut. Among the big dailies, 12 had a circulation of more than a lakh.

Marathi and Gujarati

The Marathi and Gujarati press played a very important role in the development of Indian journalism in the latter half of the 19th century and was comparable to the position occupied by the Bengali press at that time. They distinguished themselves by their campaign on two fronts, social and political. The battle for social reform first gathered strength in Bombay and Pune before it spread to other parts of the country and the Marathi press was in the vanguard of this movement. We have described this in detail in Chapter 4. Bal Gangadhar Tilak spearheaded the agitation for political freedom through his famous Marathi and English journals, *Kesari* and *Mahratta*. We have traced his career, his struggle and triumph in Chapter 7.

Besides Tilak, the outstanding Marathi journalists include: G.G. Adarkar, S.M. Paranjpe, N.C. Kelkar, A.B. Kolhatkar, Mama Warerkar, L.B. Bhopatkar, P.H. Atre, V.M. Sathe, G.T. Madholkar and N.B. Parulekar. A pioneer in Marathi journalism was Bal Shastri Jamhekar, whose fortnightly, *Bombay Durpan*, was started in Bombay in 1832. The objective of *Bombay Durpan*, which was soon converted into a weekly, was stated to be to "convey information on passing events and to point out ways and opportunities for improvement of the condition of the people." It said: "Personality would not disfigure nor servility stain the pages of *Durpan*." It played a notable part in the social reform movement and had considerable influence. After eight years it was renamed the *United Service Gazette Journal*. It stopped publication two years after the death of Jamhekar in 1842. Jamhekar has been

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called the "father of Marathi journalism" and he trained a number of able journalists. One of them was Govind Vithal Kunte whose weekly, *Prabhakar*, earned a name for its independence and fearless advocacy of causes it held dear. One of the distinguished contributors to *Prabhakar*, which lived for 25 years, was Sardar Gopal Rao Hari Deshmukh, the Marathi social reformer. Another disciple of Jamhekar, Morabhat Dandekar, who edited the *Upadesha Chandrika*, defended Hinduism against attacks by missionaries.

The *Dnyan Prakash* was started in Pune in 1849 under the editorship of Krishnaji Triambak Ranade. It was a weekly until 1904 when it became a daily. Its editor then was Hari Narayan Apte, a well-known Marathi novelist. It was marked by a balanced presentation of news and views and thought provoking editorials. It was later adopted by the Servants of India Society as its organ. Three popular weeklies during this period were *Vartman Deepika* (Bombay) edited by V.B. Gokhale, *Vicharalahiri* (Pune) edited by Krishna Sastri Chiplunkar and *Dhoomketu* (Pune). Most of these journals were engaged in educating their readers on the progressive ideas of the West. There were only two Marathi dailies published from Bombay in 1898 and they were *Mumbai Vaibhav* started in 1893 by K.P. Mabendale and the *Gurakhi* edited by L.N. Joshi. In Nagpur, the *Hitavada*, a weekly, came out in 1882. It had a difficult existence and ultimately passed into the hands of the Servants of India Society in 1911. It was converted into an English weekly and in 1936 it came into the hands of A.D. Mani, who made it into a daily.

Tilak entered the world of Marathi journalism as an opponent of the social reformers like M.G. Ranade and Kashinath Trimbak Telang. His view was, as we have already seen, that social reform should wait till political independence was achieved. According to one historian "in his campaign against the reformers and in the rallying of orthodox opinion, Tilak found his political weapon. He threw his scholarship and energy into the struggle . . . . He succeeded in creating an atmosphere in which every act against the government and its officials fitted into the picture of resistance to the British and

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he used his powerful pen in reconstructing the past and attacking the present. He believed that the ends justified the means and he created public opinon in Maharashtra and found a receptive audience in young Bengal." Between 1900-1914, political leadership passed on to Bombay from Bengal and Tilak was the dominant figure in the political and journalistic fields.

Another notable figure in Marathi journalism at this time was A.B. Kolhatkar a staunch supporter of Tilak. Kolhatkar edited *Sandesh*, a Bombay daily, and made it a popular newspaper. *Sandesh* reported the Great War at length and the activities of the Home Rule League started by Tilak. Before he took over *Sandesh*, Kolhatkar had edited *Desh Sevak* with distinction and faced trial for publishing seditious articles. He introduced several new features in Marathi journalism, the most important being "Letters of Vatsala Vahini" and special coverage of sports events, especially, cricket. He coined words to enrich sports vocabulary and took many other steps to make daily journalism attractive and popular. A distinguished reporter of *Sandesh* was Anant Hari Gadre who extensively covered Tilak's tours and reported his speeches verbatim which were lapped up by ardent readers in Maharashtra. *Sandesh* was frequently in trouble with the authorities and it had many charmed lives not always under the same name.

K.P. Khadilkar, another follower of Tilak, who had edited *Kesari* for some time, was the editor of *Lokmanya* in the 1920s. He was a prolific writer and the newspaper made remarkable progress under his stewardship. However, after some time he resigned from the paper owing to difference of opinion with the management. The paper began to lose circulation and was shut down in 1925. Khadilkar started *Navakal* in Bombay in 1923 as a mouthpiece of the Congress. *Navakal* carried regular features on subjects like agriculture, commerce, industry, market trends, physical culture and books. Short stories also had a prominent place. It reached the pinnacle of success and prosperity in 1929 but this also happened to be the year in which Khadilkar was prosecuted for sedition and interned.

A newspaper in Bombay mainly patronised by the Working

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classes was *Prabhat* edited by P.M. Bhagvat. It was priced at one pice and one of its contributors was Kolhatkar. In later days it found it could not compete with the chain of newspapers and lost ground. It was the first Marathi daily to have simultaneous editions in Bombay and Pune.

A number of Marathi dailies came up in the 1940s and among them was *Navasakhti* founded by Sadanand in 1932. S.D. Javadekar was its first editor and it was a sister publication of the *Free Press Journal*. It made good progress under the editorship of Prabhakar Padhye. The *Lokasangraha* of Pune was another popular paper. The *Loka Sakhti*, which starting as a bi-weekly became a daily later, was the official organ of the Congress. It stopped publication during the 1942 movement but was revived later under the editorship of N.V. Limaye. Trust ownership of papers is popular in Maharashtra and Tilak set the example by constituting a trust for his two papers, *Kesari* and *Mahratta*.

In Marathi journalism, *Sakal*, published from Pune, occupies a pride of place. It was started in 1931 by N.B. Parulekar who had occupied high positions of power and prestige in the industry. *Sakal* has a network of correspondents throughout the country and it carries articles and features on political, economic, social and educational topics. In 1948, the *Express* group started the *Lokasatta* in Bombay. It was the first Marathi daily to appear after independence. Its first editor was T.V. Parvate. Its Sunday edition had a wide circulation. The *Maharashtra Times*, started by the *Times of India* group, in 1962, is today the largest circulated Marathi daily. It became popular within a short time because of its efforts to cater to the most diversified reader interest. There was something in it to interest every member of the family. G. Talavalkar, the present editor, is a powerful writer and has made his mark in Marathi journalism. Madok Gadakari, editor of *Lok Sakal*, published from three centres, was among the first to introduce investigative journalism in his paper. There are largely circulated Marathi dailies in Belgaum and Dharwar in Karnataka to cater to the Marathi speaking population of the areas.

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According to the registrar of newspapers in 1983, there was an increase of Marathi newspapers in 1982 from 1098 in 1981 to 1126 in 1982. Of them, 124 were dailies (third largest group after Hindi and Urdu), 365 weeklies and 97 fortnightlies. The main publication centres besides Bombay and Pune were Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. *Shetkari*, a monthly from Pune was the leading periodical with a circulation of 156, 850. The oldest newspaper is a weekly in Belgaum, *Belgaum Samachar* (1863).

A characteristic feature of early Gujarati journalism was the interest evinced in commercial news, marketing and trading. The earliest Gujarati journal was a weekly, *Mumbai-na-Samachar* founded by Furdonji Murzban in Bombay in 1822. It was converted into a daily and renamed *Bombay Samachar* in 1832. Its main object was stated to be to publish market rates and serve the business community. In 1830, the *Mumbai Vartman* was launched by Naoroji Dorabji Chandaru and a year later saw the appearance of *Jam-e-Jamshed*, a weekly published by Pestonji Manekji. It became a daily in 1853 and was popular among the Parsis. Other newspapers which came out between 1832 and 1854 included *Doorbin*, *Mombaina Kasud*, *Samachar Darpan* and *Chitranjan Darpan*.

In Ahmedabad and Surat, a leading role in the development of Gujarati journalism was played by an English magistrate, Sir Alexander Kinlock Forbes. He helped the Gujarat Vernacular Society of Ahmedabad to launch the *Vartman* in 1849. It was edited by an employee of the society. Forbes also promoted a bi-weekly. *Surat Samachar* in Surat in 1850 which, however, had only a brief existence. Surat had a journal devoted to prohibition, the *Parhejgar*. In 1854, Lallubhai Raichand started the *Shamasher Bahadur* in Ahmedabad. We have already mentioned in a previous chapter Dadabhai Naoroji's journal, *Rast Goftar* (1851) whose mission was to crusade for social reform.

The *Hitechu* was the first Gujarati daily. It had been started as a bi-weekly in 1861 but emerged as a daily in 1873. It rendered great public service during the 40 years of its life. The Gujarati press was divided into the Hindu and Parsi sections and there was no love lost between the two. There

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was deterioration in the standard of journalism and according to one writer, Gujarat became the birthplace of yellow journalism. Anxious to stem the rot which had set in, some adventurous young men started papers with high ideals and principles and one of them was *Prajabandhu* which completed 53 years in 1948. Also belonging to this category was *Gujarati Punch*. The *Kheda Vartaman*, weekly, started in Kaira in 1861, celebrated its centenary in 1961. The *Sanj Varman* of Bombay (1902) was an influential evening paper. Sorabji Palonji Kapadia was the editor of *Sanj Vartman* for a long time. It stopped publication in 1950. Gandhi's weekly, *Navjivan*, published from Ahmedabad, exerted great influence on Gujarati journalism. Gandhi had taken it from Indulal Yagnik who conducted it as a monthly. In 1919 its circulation was 9,000 and the following year it jumped to 20,000. It was renamed *Harijan Bandhu* in 1932 and Chandrasekhar Premshankar Shukla became its editor. It stopped publication in 1940 and after revival in 1946 continued for two years.

A well-known name in Gujarati journalism is that of Amritlal Seth who started his weekly, *Saurashtra* in Ranpur (Kathiawar state). Among other distinguished journalists were Iohcharam Suryaram Desai, Sorabji Kapadia, Natwarlal I. Desai Ravishanker Mehta, K.M. Munshi and Kapilraj Mehta. The first Gujarati daily from Ahmedabad was *Swarajya* with Nandlal Bodiwala as editor but it did not live for long. Bodiwala started an evening paper, *Sandesh*, with which was merged with the *Ahmedabad Samachar*. It became a morning daily in 1943. Amrithlal Seth started *Janmabhoomi*, daily, in 1943 in Ahmedabad. Samaldas Gandhi, another great name in Gujarat Journalism, was its editor. Samaldas Gandhi and his associates left *Janmabhoomi* after some time and started *Vande Mataram* and a war of words developed between the two papers. Amritlal Seth founded the Indian Languages Newspapers Association and he organised a cooperative society to help finance needy Gujarati papers. The *Janmabhoomi* group of papers have a very large circulation in Gujarat. Another group which publishes a number of Gujarati papers is the Lok Prakashan including the *Gujarat Samachar*, daily, from Ahmedabad. Gujarat

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did not have an English daily for a long time after independence until the national dailies. *Times of India* and the *Indian Express* brought out their editions from Ahmedabad. The Second Press Commission in its report drew attention to the fact that the incidence of reading of English language papers was very low in Gujarat compared to other states. The commission noted that the circulation of dailies per 1000 of the literate population in Gujarat was 78.72, the highest for language journalism. The Gujarati press has played a significant part in the freedom struggle and lent powerful support to Gandhi in the non-cooperation and constructive programmes. In 1982, there were 39 Gujarati dailies out of a total of 725 papers and 173 weeklies. Three dailies had a circulation of more than a lakh, the largest circulated paper being *Gujarat Samachar* (Ahmedabad) with 1,70,274 copies. Among periodicals, *Chitralekha*, weekly, (Bombay) with 1,83,290 copies was at the top. The oldest daily is the *Bombay Samachar* (Bombay) (1822) and among the periodicals *Kheda Vartman*, weekly, of Kaira (1861).

Kannada

Kannada journalism is over 140 years old and before independence and the reorganisation of the states, it was spread over two princely states (Mysore and Hyderabad) and two provinces of British India (Bombay and Madras). The publishing centres were Mysore and Bangalore (Mysore), Belgaum, Dharwar and Hubli (Bombay), Mangalore (Madras), Gulburga (Hyderabad). In Mysore state it had to struggle for existence in the face of repressive measures by the state administration and it also had to face the wrath of the British rulers outside for espousing the cause of freedom and solidarity with the forces of nationalism. The Kannada press has a proud record in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Gandhi, and the sacrifices made and the persecution and imprisonment suffered by the great Kannada journalists have left a rich tradition of heroism and patriotism.

There is a long list of great names in Kannada journalism and it includes M. Venkatakrishnaiah, the father of Kannada

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journalism, D.V. Gundappa, T.T. Sharma, P.R. Ramaiah, B.N. Gupta, M. Seetharama Sastri, Aswathanarayana Rao, R.R. Diwakar, M.S. Gurupadaswami and B.R. Moharay.

As in many other parts of India, Christian missionaries were the pioneers of Kannada journalism. The first Kannada newspaper, a fortnightly, was published in Mangalore in 1843 and it was called *Mangaloora Samachara*. Rev. Herman Moegling of the Basel Mission was its editor and publisher. Although its main objective was to propagate Christianity, it also published news of importance and of local interest. According to one source, it carried at least three local news stories besides government circulars and notifications. After a year it was shifted to Bellary where it assumed a new name, *Kannada Samachara*. But it did not live long in its new habitat. Belgaum has the distinction of bringing out the first Kannada weekly, *Subuddhir Prakasha* in 1849. In Mysore, which was the home of Kannada newspapers in the latter half of the 19th century, the *Mysooru Vrittanta Bodhini*, a weekly, appeared in 1859 under the editorship of Bhasyam Tirumalacharya. It was patronised by the Maharaja of Mysore and carried news of government activities. It lasted till 1864. The Mysore Government published an Anglo-Kannada weekly, the *Mysore Gazette* in 1866. L. Rickett, its first editor, not only published government notifications and circulars but also other news and views and even criticism of government policy. The first Kannada daily, *Suryodaya Prakashika* was published in Bangalore in 1888 by B. Narasinga Rao but very soon it had to be reduced to a weekly for financial reasons.

M. Venkatakrishnaiah, the outstanding journalist of early Kannada journalism, brought out his weekly, *Vrittanta Chintamani* in 1885, in Mysore. He laid the foundation for modern Kannada journalism. An admirer has written: "His writings were marked by simplicity, directness and effectiveness. He was sensitive, intelligent, honest, learned, unsparing in his views and disciplined in public and private conduct." He had a reformer's zeal. He fought the Government with his pen and and he was a hero to his readers. He was a member of the Mysore Representative Assembly and a philanthropist. He

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started educational institutions, hostels and orphanages and made a donation to the University of Mysore to be used to give a prize to the best student in journalism if and when such a course was started. (It took 30 years for the university to start a course in journalism.) Venkatakrishnaiah started more than 10 newspapers in Kannada and English. Among them, the Kannada journals were *Sampadabhyudaya*, a daily (1912) and the *Sadhwi*, a weekly. Two journalists trained by him, M. Gopala Iyengar and M. Srinivasa Iyengar, started the *Kannada Nadegannadi* in Bangalore in 1895. It was popular and had great influence.

In 1908 the Mysore Government enacted the Mysore Newspaper Regulation Act under which permission of the government had to be obtained before publication of a newspaper. It was also laid down that the Government could withdraw permission from any newspaper at any time and those who published newspapers without permission or continued to publish after withdrawal of permission could be externed. A victim of the Act was the editor of *Kannada Nadegannadi* who was deported from the state. The *Bharathi*, a nationalist daily started in 1907 was suppressed. Venkatakrishnaiah stoutly protested against the press regulation and his newspapers closed down as a gesture. The Press Act was modified during the regime of Dewan Visveswarayya and Venkatakrishnaiah resumed publication of his journals. Between 1880 and 1908, a number of Kannada newspapers appeared and among them were: *Kannada Kesari* (Hubli, 1888), *Vokkligara Patrika* (Bangalore, 1907) and the *Arthasadhaka Patrika* (1914). During this period, many women journalists made their entry into the the profession and among them were T. Sanjeevamma (*Shagyodaya* 1914, Shimoga) and Tirumalamma (*Karnataka Nandini*, 1916, Mysore).

The early part of this century was also notable for the work of a distinguished Kannada journalist, D.V. Gundappa. A scholar in Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English, Gundappa started a Kannada daily, *Samachar Sangraha* in Bangalore in 1907. It was followed by a weekly, *Sumati* (1909). Another weekly, *Karnataka*, lived for 14 years. The language

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used by Gundappa was too scholarly and went above the heads of the ordinary reader but still it exercised great influence on the public and administration. He crossed swords with the then Dewan, Sir M. Visveswarayya often and he took a bold line in political and social matters. Visveswarayya was a firm champion of press freedom and the press was allowed to function freely during his period of office.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak exercised great influence on the Kannada press in the first two decades of the century, especially in the Kannada-speaking area of Bombay Presidency. Among the Kannada journalists who were influenced by Tilak were Alur Venkat Rao, who founded *Jayakarnataka* in 1922, Hardekar Manjappa whose *Dhanurdhari* carried translations of Tilak's articles in *Kesari* and *Sitarama Sastri* who started the Veerakesari. Alur Venkat Rao was one of the earliest writers to plead for unification of Karnataka which was later achieved under the reorganisation of the states, after independence. Other newspapers which made an important contribution to the political movement were *Chandrodaya*, Dharwar (1913), *Karmaveera*, Dharwar (1921), *Kannadiga*, Bagalkot (1925), *Sachitra Bharata*, Dharwar (1913), K. Vasudevacharya's *Shubhodaya*, Dharwar (1917) and *Vijaya*, Dharwar (1921).

In 1921 Tirumala Tatacharya Sharma started *Viswakarnataka* which played an important role in promoting the national cause and incurred the hostility of the Government. For 20 years Sharma launched a crusade for freedom, made great sacrifices, suffered imprisonment and refused to submit to the dictates of the government. The paper was suppressed in 1929 by the state government for its reports of riots in Bangalore. On this occasion editors of two other papers, Sitarama Sastri of *Veerakesari* and Aswathanarayana Rao of *Navjeevana* were prosecuted for sedition and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. The *Viswakarnataka*, which had a different editor and management, in 1942, played a formidable role during the Quit India Movement. It was again suppressed in 1944 for an alleged seditious editorial and an open letter to the viceroy. It was revived in 1945.

In the ranks of nationalist newspapers must be included

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Tai Nadu founded in 1926 in Mysore by P.R. Ramaiah. It started as a weekly and then moved over to Bangalore where it was converted into a daily in 1929. It fought hard for responsible Government in the state and the national cause. Ramaiah and P.H. Srinivas, who became its editor later, courted imprisonment in 1943. *Tai Nadu* celebrated its silver jubilee in 1952.

The *Samyukta Karnataka* of Hubli was in the vanguard of the freedom movement in north Karnataka. It was started as a weekly in Belgaum in 1929 but it moved to Hubli and became a daily in 1933. Its sponsors were Kabbur Madhwa Rao, Rama Rao Hukkerikar and R.R. Diwakar. It became a byword in Karnataka journalism and its most famous editor was H.R. Mohray. Mohray came from a family of journalists and was connected with *Karnatak Vaibhavak*, one of the oldest Kannada weeklies in Bijapur started by his ancestors. Mohray who in the post-independence period became a national figure, being president of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and a director of the Press Trust of India, was editor of *Samyukta Karnataka* for over 25 years. He made the paper the authentic voice of the leaders of the freedom struggle and it enjoyed immense popularity in north Karnataka. During the Police Action in Hyderabad after independence, the *Samyukta Karnataka* played a prominent part and the Nizam banned its entry into Gulburga and other areas of Hyderabad. However, Mohray managed to smuggle the paper into the Nizam's territory under another name. Mohray insisted that every newspaperman should have a thorough grounding in the classics and erudition in Sanskrit. He was so well versed with local events and legends that he would find a parallel for everything in other parts of the world. One who had worked under him said he had a phenomenal memory and could reproduce without blemish a two-hour speech. He was an ideal journalist who was endowed with rich common sense and who hated personal publicity. He went to jail during the Salt *Satyagraha*. He had two objectives, *Swaraj* and *Akanda Karnataka* and he saw them realised during his lifetime. The people of north Karnataka were so fond of *Samyukta Karnataka* that when in 1940 it faced a financial crisis, they came forward

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and raised a fund to meet its commitments. Unfortunately, after the passing away of Mohray in 1960, the paper was involved in litigation which has been going on for a long time and today the managing director of the paper is a court receiver.

A powerful weekly in Dharwar in 1921 was *Karmaveer* which carried on in the face of heavy odds and official persecution its mission to propagate the message of freedom. R.R. Diwakar was its editor and Madhwa Rao its publisher. At one time Diwakar was arrested for the paper's anti-government attitude. *Karmaveer* later moved on to Hubli. Its most notable editor was H.R. Purohit who held that post for 30 years.

An enterprising journalist was B.N. Gupta who started many journals during the freedom fight. He started *Prajamata*, a weekly, in Madras in 1931 and then brought it to Bangalore. It was banned by the state government and was shifted to Hubli (then in Bombay Presidency). When its entry into Mysore state was banned, Gupta changed the name of the journal into *Prajamitra* and sold it in Mysore and Bangalore. M.S. Gurupadaswami was its editor. Gupta started a daily, *Janvani*, in 1934 to promote the national cause. He later sold it to an industrialist of Bombay.

There was no Kannada daily in Mangalore (which until the reorganisation of states after independence was part of the Madras Presidency) until 1941 although it was the birthplace of a number of weeklies, as many as ten at one time. The daily, *Navabharata*, which appeared in 1941 under the editorship of V.S. Kudva is still going strong today. The *Udayavani* of Manipal (1970) and its sister illustrated weekly, *Taranga* (1983) are also popular.

The most widely circulated Kannada daily today is the *Prajavani* started in 1948 as a sister paper of the *Deccan Herald*. B. Puttaswamiah was its first editor. The weekly, *Sudha*, published by this group is also very popular. The *Indian Express* group's *Kannada Prabha* was brought out in 1957 with N.S. Sitarama Sastri as its editor. Other newspapers which have earned a name after 1980 are *Lokwani*, Bangalore (1974), *Vishwa Karnataka*, Hubli (1947), *Janamitra*, Chikmagalur

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(1969) and *Nadoja*, Belgaum (1974). An influential weekly in Hubli today is *Prapancha* started in 1954 by Patil Puttappa who is also its editor.

In 1983 there were 625 Kannada newspapers according to the registrar of newspapers. Of them, 80 were dailies. three bi-weeklies, 150 weeklies and 114 fortnightlies. Six hundred and three newspapers were published from Karnataka and the rest from Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Three of the eight big dailies had a circulation of more than a lakh. *Prajavani* was the largest circulated daily and *Sudha* the largest circulated weekly.

Telugu

Andhra Pradesh has produced some of the outstanding journalists who have brought lustre and glory to the profession both before and after independence. They include C.Y. Chintamani, T. Prakasam, K. Natarajan, G.V. Krupanidhi, Khasa Subba Rau, M. Chalapati Rau, K. Rama Rao, and Rama Koteswara Rao. But they were all devoted to English journalism of which they were shining ornaments. There were comparatively fewer journalists of repute in Telugu journalism which had a slow growth. The language newspaper, as we know it today did not appear before the early years of this century.

The earliest Telugu journals were promoted by missionaries and were mostly intended for religious propaganda. The first Telugu journal, a monthly, called *Satya Doota*, was published from Bellary in 1835. Printed in Madras, it concentrated on propagating the gospel of Christ. *Dinavartamani*, a weekly, came out in 1861 and it ceased publication after seven years. Many Telugu journals were started to counteract the missionary propaganda. Among them was *Tathya Bodhini* (1864) published from Madras by the Veda Samaj. It serialised the Rig Veda along with Telugu translation and commentary. In 1895, K. Veeresalingam Pantulu, the great social reformer and scholar, started in Rajahmundry a weekly, *Vivekavardhini*. It was devoted to language reform and education. Hailed as the father of Telugu journalism, Veeresalingam Pantulu

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dominated the social and cultural life of the Telugu country in the latter half of the 19th century. He conducted a magazine, *Hasyavardhani*, devoted to humour, another weekly, *Satyavardhini* and *Satihita Bodhini*, devoted exclusively to women readers. At about the same time, Venkataratnam Pantulu brought out *Andhrabasha Sanjivini*, a weekly, to oppose the reformist school represented by Veeresalingam Pantulu.

The first news weekly, *Andhra Prakasika*, edited by A.P. Parthasarathy Naidu, appeared in Madras in 1885 as a supporter of the National Congress which had then been formed. It flourished for 25 years after which it was converted into a bi-weekly and again into a weekly. It ceased publication after some time. *Sasilekha* (1894) published by Gathupalli Seshacharyulu was the first weekly to campaign for the unification of Telugu-speaking areas and the formation of a separate province of Andhra Pradesh, a dream which did not fructify until long after independence. The bulk of the Telugu area remained under the composite Madras Presidency and the residue in the Nizam's territory. And this perhaps explains why Madras was the centre of Telugu journalism for a long time. The exploits of the revolutionary heroes of Bengal were told to Telugu readers by the *Andhra Kesari*, published from Rajahmundry which gave extensive publicity to the trials and conviction of the young Bengali nationalists. A powerful instrument of political education was *Krishna Patrika* started by the veteran Congress leader, Konda Venkatappaiah in Guntur in 1902 on behalf of the Krishna District Association. Mutnuri Krishna Rao took charge of it in 1907 and it played a remarkable role in the freedom battle. Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, historian of the Congress, and a journalist himself, was the guiding spirit behind the *Krishna Patrika*.

The *Andhra Patrika*, which has a unique place in the history of Telugu journalism, was born as a weekly in Bombay in 1908. It was started by K. Nageswara Rao Pantulu, a businessman, who sold a pain balm and whose patriotic instincts led him into journalism. The weekly was an immediate success and when it was shifted to Madras in 1914 and later converted into a daily, it became the symbol and instrument of national

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resurgence in the Telugu country. It played a dynamic role in rousing political consciousness and spreading the Gandhian and Congress ideology among the Telugu masses. The Telugu territory became one of the Congress bastions in the fight against British rulers and *Andhra Patrika's* role in making this possible was memorable. A notable editor in the early days was Seshagiri Rao who strove hard to put the *Patrika* firmly on its feet and make it truly the voice of Telugu nationalism. After his death, Nageswara Rao took over the editorship himself and until 1938, the *Patrika* was virtually without a rival. Nageswara Rao combined in himself the patriot, the journalist and the businessman, and he emerged as one of the stalwarts among Andhra Congressmen. He was a devout follower of Gandhi and often prison was his home for long periods. He was a philanthropist and gave freely to the freedom movement and in the cause of education and charities. After the passing away of Nageswara Rao, the *Patrika* was managed by a trust. When the Andhra province was formed after the reorganisation of the states, the *Patrika* shifted Vijayawada and today it is published from Hyderabad also.

The *Express* group started the *Andhra Prabha* in Madras in 1938 and its first editor was Khasa Subba Rau. Khasa's column, "Pan Supari," became a rage with readers and pushed up the circulation. N. Narayana Murthi followed Subba Rau as editor and stabilised its popularity. The most famous editor of *Andhra Prabha*, however, was Narla Venteshwara Rao, who indeed carved for himself a unique and unassailable place in Telugu journalism. Of him, D. Sanjivayya, Congress leader of Andhra Pradesh, wrote: "Narla Venkateshwara Rao is one of the major figures in Telugu journalism and has been in the forefront of his calling during the last three decades. His name is synonymous with Telugu journalism. If today Telugu journalism has achieved standards that come up to the best in English journalism in India, the credit should largely go to him. He is widely read and is the master of a style that is at once chaste, forceful and popular. The commoner and the scholar are equally thrilled by his editorials. For him no price is too high to uphold the freedom of the press in general and of the editor in particular. Narla is also

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a leading litterateur. He is a poet, playwright and an essayist. He also made a name as a writer in English." Narla, who was a member of the Rajya Sabha for some time, was a voracious reader and no branch of knowledge was beyond his reach. He coined scientific Telugu terminology. He played a vital role through the *Andhra Prabha* in shaping public opinion. He was fiercely independent and when his editorial freedom was threatened he resigned from the *Andhra Prabha* and became the editor of *Andhra Jyoti* which was started in 1960 in Vijayawada. Under his inspiring guidance and leadership, the *Andhra Jyoti* expanded its circulation and popularity. Narla died in 1985.

The formation of the Andhra Pradesh state in 1953 gave a fillip to Telugu journalism. Four dailies which were started at about this time were: *Andhra Janata* (Hyderabad), *Andhra Bhoomi*, *Rajahmundry Samacharam* (Rajahmundry) and *Vishalandhra* (Vijayawada).

In 1947, a new Telugu daily was launched in Hyderabad by C.V. Ramoji Rao which created a sensation and blazed a new record in circulation for any language daily. *Eenadu* is today printed in four centres of Andhra Pradesh and its circulation is over four lakhs. It campaigned for the film star, N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections and was one of the few papers to predict his sweeping success. It aroused controversy by its daring stands on public issues and its determined attack on the Congress leadership in the state.

The Second Press Commission noted that the circulation of Telugu dailies and weeklies per 1000 of the literate population in 1979 was low compared to the other major language groups. It was only 30.4 for dailies and 30.60 for weeklies compared to 73.99 and 79.40 respectively for Malayalam and 78.72 and 48.80 respectively for Gujarati. According to the registrar of newspapers in 1982, there were 553 Telugu newspapers, compared to 546 in 1981. Of these, 31 were dailies, 145 weeklies and 89 fortnightlies. All except one daily were published from Andhra Pradesh and among the publishing centres were Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam.

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Tamil

Compared to many other Indian languages, journalism was rather slow in growth and towards the end of the 19th century there were not many Tamil newspapers. The early Tamil journals were non-political and mostly promoted by missionaries who used them as vehicles for proselytisation. The first Tamil journal was a monthly, *Tamil Patrika*, (1831) published by the religious Tract Society. Although it had government support, it did not survive long and closed down after two years. Another journal of this period was *Rajavritti Bodhini* (1855) which specialised in publishing news items translated from newspapers received from England. *Dinavarthamani*, its contemporary, was a weekly edited by the Rev. P. Percival and published by the Dravidian Press. It had government support and was reputed to have had a circulation of 1000 copies. A British-sponsored publication was *Jana Vinodhini* which captured public imagination by carrying a series on the *Ramayana*. It gave greater importance to literary and educational subjects than to current events and news. *Viveka Vilasam* appeared in 1865 and its main object was to counteract the missionaries' propaganda. It was promoted by non-Christian Tamil scholars. Madras was the home of these journals and it was also the centre from where newspapers in other Indian languages were published. In 1876, nineteen journals were published from Madras in four languages: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

The first Tamil newspaper in the real sense was the *Swadeshamitran* which was started as a weekly in 1882 by G. Subramania Aiyer who was also the founder of *The Hindu*. It became a daily in 1899 and dominated Tamil journalism until 1934. It was a pioneering effort for Subramania Aiyer and very soon he was equally at home in Tamil journalism as he was remarkably so in English journalism. The poet and patriot, Subramania Bharati, who was a Tamil journalist himself and edited a newspaper for some time, entered the portals of journalism through the *Swadeshamitran* which he served as a sub-editor for a short period. He paid this tribute to

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Subramania Aiyer in a letter to *The Hindu* from Pondicherry in December, 1914: "Unaided he (Subramania Aiyer) had made Tamil journalism a fact of the world, in spite of his very imperfect early training in Tamil literature. Learn, says the Tamil aphorist, while you are yet young. In Mr. Subramania Aiyer's youth he had wholly neglected his mother-tongue like most people in this country who claim to have been 'educated' in English schools. But his mature patriotism had to realise later on that for the elevation of the Tamil race, the Tamil language would be not only the most rational but the indispensable medium. They win who dare; Mr. Aiyer dared and he has succeeded in establishing a Tamil daily journal which with all its faults is the most useful newspaper in the Tamil country."

After Subramania Aiyer, A. Rangaswami Iyengar took over the editorship of the paper. He carried out many improvements in its format and contents and with his name and prestige made it very influential in provincial and national politics. The *Swadeshamitran* became the spokesman of the Congress and also the Tamil version of *The Hindu* whose popularity and circulation it shared in fair measure. But the man who was its greatest editor and made it a household name was C.R. Srinivasan, who took over from Rangaswami Iyengar in 1928. His strongest weapon was his editorials in which, in simple language and style, he explained to his readers political and economic issues which until then had remained a closed chapter to large masses of Tamil readers. In his hands the *Swadeshamitran* proved to be both a teacher and a leader for the Tamil literates whose political consciousness was stirred by its relentless campaign for the country. C.R.S. as he was affectionately known in journalist circles, was a brilliant commentator in English also and his frequent contributions on men and matters appeared in *The Hindu* and were greatly enjoyed by its readers. He was a leader in his profession and in the post-independence era was involved in its advancement in various spheres. The *Swadeshamitran* declined after his passing away in 1962 and folded up some years later. It was taken over by another owner but did not pick up strength.

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In 1917, V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar started a daily, *Desabhaktan*, which had a short life of three years. Its aim was to present a new and refined style in display of news and one of its editors was the revolutionary, V.V.S. Aiyer. It did not have much of an impact but Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's weekly, *Navasakhti*, which was a political and literary magazine, was an instant success. Another great name in Tamil journalism during the period was that of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, whose *Tamil Nadu*, a daily, published from Madras in 1926 achieved significant success. Varadarajulu Naidu was a Congressman and an ardent supporter of Annie Besant's Home Rule movement. He had earlier edited a weekly in Salem before coming over to Madras. He carried on a campaign against the Justice Party through his paper and it added to his popularity. Varadarajulu Naidu, however, began to waver in his support to the Congress from 1926 and his critics said he was leaning towards the Hindu Mahasabha. *Tamil Nadu* closed down in 1930. Some enterprising Congressmen started a paper, *India*, in 1931 but it did not make much headway. *Jayabharati*, a tabloid, priced at 3 pice, came on the scene and had some initial success. A party newspaper started by the Justice Party was the *Dravida* edited by J.S. Kannappar.

When the *Dinamani*, sponsored by the *Express* group, made its appearance in 1934 it electrified the atmosphere of Tamil journalism. It was a cheap newspaper, its price being only six pice but it was a different newspaper from its rivals in presentation of news and views. Within a month of its inception its circulation shot up and it was greater than the combined circulation of all other Tamil papers. *Dinamani* had originally been started by Sadanand who purchased the *Indian Express* from Varadarajulu Naidu. Both the papers later came into the possession of Ramnath Goenka. The first editor of *Dinamani* was T.S. Chockalingam, an ardent Congressman and a powerful writer. With him as joint editor was A.N. Sivaraman who was later to set up new records in Tamil journalism. Both Chockalingam and Sivaraman were close associates even before they came to *Dinamani*. They had jointly produced a quarter anna tri-weekly, with news and views on the *Satyagraha*

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movement and very critical of the government. Along with *Swatantra Sanghu*, another quarter anna weekly, edited by Sangh Ganesan, it became a rage at the height of the *Satyagraha* movement and sold like hot cakes. Chockalingam left the *Dinamani* in 1943 and started a daily of his own, *Dinasari*, in 1944. And the burden of running *Dinamani* fell on Sivaraman who has held the fort since with distinction and ability.

Sivaraman, the most distinguished and outstanding Tamil journalist of all times, has not had much of an education in the conventional sense. He passed the Secondary School course and joined a college in Tirunelveli but left it after barely six months. He was attracted by the Congress movement and more especially by the ideals of Tilak and he took it upon himself to carry out Congress propaganda. Although he had discontinued college education, he began educating himself through wide and purposive reading. Reading at all hours and far into the night became a habit which he has retained until his advanced age today. He was a prominent Congress volunteer in the Salt *Satyagraha* of 1930 and went to prison. He strayed into journalism and we saw how he joined Chockalingam in producing the tri-weekly *Gandhi*. After joining the *Dinamani* he switched over to its sister paper, *Indian Express*, for some years. He covered the San Francisco conference for his paper and remained in the U.S. for some years as its correspondent. He is a linguist who is proficient in Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and German, not to speak of English and Tamil. His speciality as editor of *Dinamani* has been articles on science and technology, agriculture and industry, political science and economics which he has written in a way which the common man can understand and follow with ease. In this way he has served his readers as a teacher and guide and as a man of wisdom who has a keen sense of what is good and bad and whose mission seems to be to educate his readers to be good citizens and educated patriots. In Tamil journalism today *Dinamani* is the only standard newspaper which gives as much news if not more and presents it as well as the English newspapers and the credit for keeping it on a steady keel in spite of temptations to go astray to gain

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popularity and circulation (as has happened in the case of many Tamil newspapers) must go to Sivaraman who can with great justification be called the Bhisma of Tamil journalism.

In 1942, S.B. Adityan, a barrister and a staunch Congressman, started a daily, *Dina Thanthi*, in Madurai deliberately aimed at the lower class and semi-literate population. The paper indulged in sensationalism and its four pages were filled with stories of crime, violence and the cinema in colloquial style and language which did not require much effort to understand. He supplied his readers what they liked to be fed on and they lapped it up. The paper's circulation boomed and Adityan brought out editions from Madras and other centres and today it is published from nine towns. As the Dravidian parties, the Dravida Kazhagam (under E.V. Ramaswami Naicker) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (under C.N. Annadurai) began to dominate the political scene in post-independence Madras state (before it was renamed Tamil Nadu), Adityan resigned from the Congress and joined the Dravidian movement. His great service to Tamil journalism was that he took the newspaper to the doorstep of the poor and downtrodden, the *rickshaw wallah* and the factory labourer and inculcated the newspaper reading habit in them. Over the years, *Dina Thanthi* and its groups of papers have not changed much in the type of journalism which is characteristic of them but apparently the growing readership is quite satisfied for today *Dina Thanthi* is the largest circulated Tamil daily with *Dinamani* coming second. The path shown by *Dina Thanthi* has been followed by other Tamil dailies, a common feature of which is their multiple editions and the dominance of crime, sex and cinema and political warfare in Tamil Nadu in their columns. To this category belongs *Dinakaran* published from five centres and which, unlike *Dina Thanthi*, has an editorial and produces investigative stories. It has a good circulation and one reason for its popularity is said to be its anti-establishment posture.

Another daily which has made its mark is *Dinamalar*, established by T.V. Ramasubba Aiyer, a Congressman of Tirunelveli. It was started in 1951 in Trivandrum and played

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an active role in the agitation for the merger of Tamil areas in Travancore with Tamil Nadu and was very popular for that reason. At one stage the paper's office was raided by the police and its copies were seized. This happened when Pattom Thanu Pillai was the chief minister of the state. After the success of the agitation and when Nagercoil and Kanyakumari were merged with Tamil Nadu in the reorganisation of the states, Ramasubba Aiyer moved to Tirunelveli where *Dinamalar* in 1960 concentrated on problems of the local people and getting the people's grievances redressed. Its circulation went up and an edition was started at Tiruchi in 1966 followed by one in Madras in 1979 and in Erode in 1984. *Dinamalar* introduced offset printing in 1981 and adopted other modern techniques of printing. A feature of the paper is its photographic coverage which gives it a unique place in Tamil journalism. During the Pope's visit to Madras in 1986, it came out with a four-page picture feature of the Pope's engagements in the city.

A Tamil daily which was the result of cooperative effort is *Makkal Kural* which appeared in Madras in 1973. It came to life on the ashes of *Navamani*, founded by a cooperative society, which got into trouble with the D.M.K. Government and had finally to close down. One of its leading journalists, Shanmuga Vel, floated the Newsmen Associates Ltd. in 1972 and the *Makkal Kural* came into being the next year. It had an able and experienced editor in T. Ramaswami, who was formerly connected with *Patriot* and *Link* of New Delhi and with the Federation of Working Journalists. T.R.R., as he is familiarly known to his readers and friends, has a powerful pen and a head for facts and figures with which to battle his opponents. His favourite target at one time was the D.M.K. leader, M. Karunanidhi when he was chief minister and his attacks on him in the paper pushed the circulation to dizzy heights which enabled the company to wipe off its losses and move into its own premises in 1974. It has introduced photo typesetting and the latest techniques for printing. In 1982, it started an evening English daily, *News Today*.

The Second Press Commission remarked that an "impressive

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feature of the growth of periodicals is that in almost half the languages, no daily newspaper could match the circulation of the largest circulated periodical in that language. While many periodicals are territorially restricted in their circulation penetration, some have a wide spread in their circulation/ readership across the country." This is true of Tamil periodicals which have a strong base and outstanding readership. The Press Commission noted that in 1979, the circulation of Tamil weeklies per 1000 of Tamil literates was 102.65 and for other periodicals, 86.73, which was the highest for any language group in India. The pioneer of periodical journalism in Tamil was S.S. Vasan who started *Ananda Vikatan* in 1924. It was a mixture of short story, political comment, essays on culture and art and music. Vasan who was a supporter of the Congress, introduced some of the best Tamil writers to his readers and also made the political cartoon popular. *Ananda Vikatan* became famous during the battle for freedom for the cartoons of Mali, one of the greatest cartoonists of India, on the political happenings, full of satire and ridicule. R. Krishnamurthi, who wrote under the penname, Kalki, revolutionised the Tamil short story and the historical novel. He was a great connoisseur of art and music and his reviews in Tamil which the layman could understand were a popular feature of the journal. Krishnamurthi later left *Ananda Vikatan* and started his own weekly, *Kalki*, which is today one of the leading Tamil weeklies. *Kumudam* which has the distinction of being the second largest circulated language weekly in India, came on the scene in 1947. It was started by the great philanthropist Alagappa Chettiar in a small way and through the efforts of an able team of journalists it soon captured the Tamil market with its popular features and concentration on the cinema and film stars and innovative presentation. Another weekly which is also popular is *Idayam Pesukirathu* whose editor, Manian, was originally on the staff of *Ananda Vikatan*.

Altogether different from these journals and unique in many respects is a political weekly, *Tugluk*, edited by Cho Ramaswam i, which has a wide circulation. Cho is a combination of a playwright, stage and screen actor, journalist and lawyer. He has shone in all these roles and today there must

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be very few people in Tamil Nadu and in many parts of India who have not heard of him or enjoyed his satire and parody which are the highlights of *Tugluk*. His is essentially negative journalism and his main victims are corrupt politicians and political parties who in his view are taking the country on the wrong path. His cover page cartoons and "one and a half newspaper" (which is a parody of the tabloids) have often got him into trouble with the authorities and with the Legislative Assembly (which hauled him up for contempt) but he is a fearless journalist who is determined to stand by his convictions.

Although Tamil periodicals' sway over the literate population is considerable and extends to places outside Tamil Nadu and outside India, wherever there are Tamils, their standards have fallen in the quality of the material they offer and they have become more and more commercialised. The veteran Tamil writer, K.N. Subramaniam who has noted this, wrote in a Tamil journal: "Tamil journals have been responsible for lack of respect for learning and scholarship among the people and they have been aided in this by the Tamil cinema. They have not only failed to attract the really knowledgeable and intelligent people but have also consistently lauded mediocrity. The journals which came after 1984 have successfully performed the task of removing knowledge from the literature of Tamil Nadu. They have done their best to keep away their readers from what is good to know and learn and they have succeeded in promoting a tendency among Tamils of shying away from knowledge."

According to the registrar of newspapers, there were 820 Tamil newspapers in 1983, of which 20 were big and 32 medium. There were three big dailies, 16 medium and 21 small. There were eight newspapers with a circulation of more than a lakh.

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13

THE CENTENARIANS

Amrita Bazar Patrika

There are today in India five English dailies which have crossed the century mark. Three of them, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Hindu* and the *Tribune*, are Indian owned and Indian edited and the other two, the *Times of India* and the *Statesman* were British-owned and British-edited and progressively changed into Indian hands after India became free. All these newspapers have played a major role in the evolution and growth of Indian journalism and the Indian-owned dailies made a striking contribution to creating and nurturing Indian nationalism and to the freedom struggle.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is the oldest Indian-owned daily and in 1920, Lenin described it as "the best nationalist paper in India". It was born as a weekly in Bengali in February, 1868, in the village of Amrita Bazar in Jessore district (now in Bangladesh). It was started by four brothers to fight the cause of peasants who were being exploited by indigo planters. Sisir Kumar, the more famous among the brothers, was the editor and the story of *Patrika* was the story of Sisir Kumar's relentless fight against the alien rulers who were determined to suppress this mouthpiece of the poor and downtrodden Indians. The *Patrika* moved to Calcutta in 1871 and functioned as a bi-lingual weekly, publishing news and views in English along with Bengali. Its anti-government views and its influence among the people provoked the Government of Lord Lytton to take action against the language press. But before the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 (said to be mainly directed towards the *Patrika*) was promulgated, the *Patrika* overnight became an English weekly and so escaped the clutches of the

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law. With increased circulation and greater influence with the people, the *Patrika* continued to remain a thorn in the side of the administration. Every effort was made to buy the *Patrika* by temptations but Sisir Kumar refused to be tempted. The *Patrika* became a daily in February, 1891, and plunged into the nationalist movement which had received a fillip with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The *Patrika* created history during the term of Lord Landsdowne as viceroy when it published a confidential document of the Foreign Office concerning Kashmir. It created a sensation among official circles and a law was passed to prevent disclosure of official documents and background material without prior permission. Sisir Kumar fought for the rights of Indians and demanded for them increased representation in the administration and in the professions. He launched vigorous campaigns against restrictions on civil liberties and economic exploitation. He pleaded for the establishment of representative institutions for Indians to have a say in the administration. He contributed much to arouse the political consciousness of the people and he founded the Indian League in 1875, which probably was the first political association in India. Sisir Kumar and his brother Motilal Ghosh were deeply attached to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. When Tilak was prosecuted for sedition in 1897, they raised funds in Calcutta for his defence. When Tilak was again tried for sedition for articles in the *Kesari* and sentenced to six years' imprisonment by an Indian judge, Motilal Ghosh, who succeeded his brother as editor pointed out "the absurdity of a homeless Parsi judge (Justice Dawar) unfit to tie the shoelaces of Tilak, indulging in wanton insult to the distinguished accused and presuming to teach true patriotism to a proved and unparalleled patriot."

The *Patrika* had many brushes with Lord Curzon, viceroy, who partitioned Bengal and roused the people to a paroxysm of fury. The partition saw the birth of the *Swadeshi* movement which spread like wildfire throughout the country. On one occasion, the overbearing and arrogant viceroy in an address to the Calcutta University said Indians were lacking in veracity. The *Patrika* replied to this sweeping denunciation with an equally scathing retort. It quoted passages from

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Curzon's book on the Far East which described the falsification of age and other particulars in his interview with the president of the Korean Foreign Office. It was unwise, it told the viceroy, for one who lived in a glass house to throw stones at others. When Curzon resigned in 1905, the *Patrika* wrote : "Young and a little foppish and without previous training but invested with unlimited powers, Lord Curzon, a superior 'purzon' rose like a rocket and fell like a stick." The *Patrika* was one of the victims of the Press Act of 1910 when in 1913 a security of Rs. 5,000 was demanded from it. Motilal Gosh was charged with contempt of court in one case. He fought bravely in court and the case was dismissed. When Subhas Bose and other students were expelled from the Calcutta Presidency College for nationalist activities, the *Patrika* took up their case and succeeded in having them re-admitted. Motilal, who was an extremist in politics, often clashed with his Moderate counterpart, Surendranath Banneriee, through the columns of their newspapers.

When for the first time an Indian member of the Imperial Legislative Council stood up to criticise the government's budget as Gokhale did in 1902, the *Patrika* wrote : "We had entertained the ambition of seeing some Indian member openly and fearlessly criticising the financial statement of the government. But this ambition was never satisfied. When members had ability they had not the requisite courage : when they had the requisite courage they had not the ability. For the first time in the annals of British rule in India, a native of India has not only succeeded in exposing the fallacies which underlie the Government statements but has ventured to do it in an uncompromising manner. Mr Gokhale has demonstrated that the members of the council have their duties towards their country and in performing them must not think of self."

A leading role was played by Motilal to bring about a compromise between Gokhale the Moderate leader, and Tilak, who were bitter political opponents. Motilal, who was a friend of both, advised them to end their feud and forge a united Congress. He wrote to Gokhale in November, 1914 : "My heart bleeds for the motherland. I am anxious that you

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and Tilak should shake hands and embrace each other as brothers. I know you bear no malice or ill-will to him. I further know that even if you have any cause for offence, you are generous enough to forgive and forget, especially at the present critical moment. As you are in a more favourable position, it would be a graceful act for you to make an advance. If he rejects, the people will blame him and bless you. But I believe he will appreciate your motive...The so-called Bengali leaders are now fossils. It is a Mahratta intellect and patriotism which must save the country. If you and Tilak make up, there is yet hope for India."

Motilal Ghosh has been described as a man "thin and erect with his mass of grey hair surmounting a face in which pathos, humour and subtlety were mingled." His occasional exuberant professions of loyalty to the British Crown could have shamed the most sentimental royalist in England. Writing in the *Patrika* in 1887, on the Madras Congress, he said it had drawn the hearts of the people towards the governor as their own real ruler. In short, the European community in general at Madras seemed to sympathise with the movement like true and genuine Britons. He added : "An institution like the National Congress implies, in fact, requires the permanent existence of British rule in India." His loyalty however, did not prevent him from directing the guns of the *Patrika* at the viceroy, the governor of Bengal, and other officials to the great delight of his readers and the great annoyance of his victims.

After the Surat Congress fiasco when the Moderates charged Tilak with being the villain of the piece, Motilal Ghosh persuaded Tilak to appease his opponents in writing what amounted to a letter of regret and waiving his opposition to the election of Rash Behari Ghosh as president. He invoked the spirit of forgive and forget and offered his co-operation to preserve the unity of the Congress. Motilal himself took the letter to the Moderates but was, in his own words, "simply bowled out by the Moderate leaders headed by Pherozeshah Mehta."

When Motilal died in September, 1922, the *Statesman*

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wrote : "The death of Babu Motilal Ghosh removes perhaps the most remarkable personality in Bengal. For more than half a century he carried on through his paper what was neither more nor less than a journalistic vendetta against the British Government and against the English race. No incident was too trivial to be pressed into the service of his propaganda or to be twisted into some real or fancied grievance. Yet Motilal Ghosh had a warm corner in his heart for individual Britons even while he insisted on regarding the majority of their countrymen as vampires. He was in many ways a genial soul, which if it had not been warped by a fanatical hatred of everything British, might have done a great deal to promote a mutual understanding between the two races."

The *Patrika* contributed its share to the success of the freedom movement under the leadership of Gandhi and suffered for its views and actions at the hands of the British rulers. Its security of Rs. 5,000 deposited in 1913 was forfeited in 1919 and a fresh security of Rs. 10,000 was demanded. The *Patrika* wrote : "We shall go on doing our duty as usual so long as life and freedom are preserved for us." The *Patrika* forfeited its security for a second time in 1932 during the Salt *Satyagraha* and it had to furnish a fresh security of Rs. 6,000. Three years later its editor, Tushar Kanti Ghosh (son of Sisir Kumar) was hauled up in court on a defamation charge and sentenced to imprisonment.

The *Patrika* espoused the cause of communal harmony during the darkest periods of communal frenzy which disfigured Calcutta and other parts of the country. During the great Calcutta killing in 1946, the *Patrika* in anger and sorrow left its editorial columns blank for three days. When freedom dawned on August 15, 1947, the *Patrika* wrote : "It is dawn, cloudy though it is. Presently, sunshine will break." In the words of an admirer of the *Patrika* : "In its 117th year, the *Patrika* continues to serve the public as a living example of responsible journalism, upholding the ideals of independence, democracy and secularism and holding its head high against all forms of communalism and parochialism."

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The Hindu

Six young men, all in their twenties, founded *The Hindu* in Madras on September 20, 1878. Two of them. G. Subramania Aiyer and M. Veeraraghavacharier, stayed on later to become joint proprietors of the paper which started as a weekly and became a daily in 1889. They all belonged to a society called the Triplicane Literary Society which was a forum for discussion of political and social topics and attracted the elite of Madras. The immediate reason for starting the paper was the criticism by British-owned newspapers of the appointment of T. (later Sir T.) Muthuswami Aiyer as judge of the Madras High Court. In the words of Subramania Aiyer : "Unable to stand this unfairness, six of us joined together and started *The Hindu*. When we started the newspaper we had no idea of the responsibility which its publication would involve, of how to conduct it, of the expenditure to be incurred, etc. Since we had no money with us, we borrowed one rupee and three-quarters and printed and published 80 copies."

In its first editorial *The Hindu* wrote : "We are inclined to be conservative as much as it is consistent with the national progress of the natives . . . . The principles that we proposed to be guided by are simply those of fairness and justice. It will always be our aim to promote harmony and union among our fellow countrymen and to interpret correctly the feelings of the natives and to create mutual confidence between the governed and the governors." At the time *The Hindu* appeared, public opinion in Madras Presidency was stagnant and there were very few recognised forums to voice the feelings and grievances of the Indian population. It filled a vacuum and was instantly popular. Bipin Chandra Pal, who was at one time its Calcutta correspondent, said of *The Hindu* in 1881 : "I found *The Hindu* had already become a great power and an influence for good in Madras Presidency." He said that the emphasis of English educated Indians was "not on our respective provincialities, but almost exclusively on India's national unity. This helped *The Hindu* to be accepted from its

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very birth as an all-India paper even though it could not claim any large all-India circulation."

From its inception *The Hindu* clashed with officialdom and exposed its misdeeds and abuse of power. In line with the thinking of the nationalist leaders of the time it was a firm believer in British rule and its quarrel was with the bureaucracy, with the way it functioned in India. *The Hindu* and its editor, Subramania Aiyer, were from the beginning closely associated and the Congress and Subramania Aiyer had the distinction of moving the first resolution in the first Congress session in Bombay in 1885. This close association was to continue even after independence. Subramania Aiyer, who started life as a college lecturer, was a great social reformer and he used the columns of *The Hindu* to propagate his views. He was much ahead of his time and his vigorous campaigns led to a fall in circulation and he had to part company with the paper in 1898. C.Y. Chintamani said of him : "He was the greatest journalist of his generation. He was not only great in Indian journalism but also a great social reformer whose revolutionary ideas were almost a century ahead of his times." *The Hindu* described him as the "maker of Indian journalism in Madras Presidency."

The Hindu changed hands in 1905 when S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, a lawyer, bought it and became its editor. He was a man of tremendous energy and capacity. Within a year he reorganised the paper, improved its get-up and news service and made it a commercial proposition. He had in his nephew, S. Rangaswami, a versatile writer, whose editorials were charged with power and emotion and were read with avidity. He hit hard at opponents and his main target were the Moderates whom he described as "lost leaders" who left their comrades for a "handful of gold or riband." His strong editorials on the Punjab atrocities in 1919 led to a demand from the government for a security of Rs. 2,000 under the Press Act. *The Hindu's* entry was banned in Britain in 1918 even while its editor was in that country as a member of the editor's delegation which visited the war fronts, on the grounds that it carried news and views prejudicial to the conduct of

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the war. The Nizam of Hyderabad also had the distinction of banning *The Hindu* in 1923 because he did not like some articles on Hyderabad published in the paper.

A. Rangaswami Iyengar became the editor in 1928 and he performed the duties of both an editor and a Congressman. He was secretary of the Indian National Congress for many years and also a leading member of the party in the Central Legislative Assembly. *The Hindu* had many distinguished correspondents abroad, among them Subhas Bose in Vienna and V.K. Krishna Menon elsewhere in Europe. After the death of Rangaswami Iyengar, Kasturi Srinivasan, son of Kasturiranga Iyengar, took over as Managing editor of the paper in 1934 and remained in that post till his death in 1959. Srinivasan's stewardship was the golden era of the paper when it forged ahead and established its reputation and fame not only in India but also abroad. Although Srinivasan did not actively participate in politics, he acted as a wise counsellor and guide to Congress leaders and sometimes as an intermediary for them with the government. During the great confrontation between the Indian press and the alien government he was, as we have noted in an earlier chapter, the champion of the rights of the press and did not hesitate to non-cooperate with the government when it became necessary. He saw *The Hindu's* page one become a news page in 1958 when it abandoned its policy of over 80 years of carrying only advertisements on that page. His brother's sons, C. Narasimham and C. Kasturi took over after Srinivasan's death.

The Hindu has many firsts to its credit. It was the first Indian newspaper to have its own plane service for distribution of the paper to its far-flung readers. This was done in 1963, and in 1969, *The Hindu* achieved another first when it launched its facsimile editions in Coimbatore and later extended it to Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madurai. Again it was the first to introduce phototype setting for printing the paper. In 1978, *The Hindu* brought out a sports weekly, *Sportstar*. Its predecessor, *Sports and Pastime* which made its mark in sports journalism, had to be closed down in 1968 owing to labour trouble. In 1984 the *Frontline*, a fortnightly news magazine, made its appearance with news pictures as its strong point.

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The Hindu has been praised as one of the world's best newspapers by the London *Times* and western journalists and authors. It was the recipient of the World Press Achievement Award for 1968 from the American Newspaper Publishers' Association Foundation. When G. Narasimham passed away in 1977, the post of managing editor was abolished and G. Kasturi took over full control of the paper as editor. *The Hindu* has had the good fortune to be served by a dedicated team of journalists during its long career who have made it an institution whose watchwords have been accuracy, reliability and credibility. Most notable among these men was N. Raghunathan, seniormost assistant editor, who retired in 1957 after 30 years of devoted service. We shall note his career in another chapter.

The Hindu in an editorial in 1967, wrote what can be termed as its testament : "We must make it clear", it said, "that we are an independent, non-party newspaper, wedded to the national interest as we see it. We are not the mouthpiece of any party. We have been more often critical of the ruling party perhaps than singing its praises. We have always made a distinction between programmes and measures on the one side and personalities and parties on the other. Our criticisms have been primarily concerned with the nonwisdom or inappropriateness of certain policies or decisions and whatever governments may come to power we shall continue to judge them not by their professions but by their performance." *The Hindu* has postulated three basic principles to make freedom of the press real. The first is that the press must keep its own house clean and exercise reasonable restraint on its functioning. Freedom should not be allowed to degenerate into licence which would open the door to government interference. The second is the response of authority to the smooth functioning of the press by removing physical restraints and to enable it to reach as wide a readership as it would wish. The third and the most important is the attitude of society as a whole, which besides the public, includes politicians, trade unions, advertisers, etc. The press has been subjected to pressure from one or another of these sources

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and the less viable among the press have found it difficult to withstand it. "Press freedom can come to prevail only when all sections of the body politic resolve to make it prevail by removing all impediments in the way," *The Hindu* has said.

The Statesmen

Jawaharlal Nehru, it is said, read the *Statesman* every morning during the days of the freedom struggle when he was out of prison and it was one of the newspapers supplied to him when he was in prison which happened frequently. In 1928, when the nationalists organised a boycott of the Simon Commission which came to enquire into constitutional reforms, the *Statesman* applied to them to cooperate with the commission and this led to a campaign to boycott the paper and copies of the paper were burnt. But it did not deter a prominent nationalist leader from reading the paper's editorials. Asked about it he said : "We may not agree with them but we must concede that they talk sense. And look at the brilliant way they have put forward their arguments. What wonderful language, what style ! No, no, we mustn't burn a paper like this." "The *Statesman* is singularly free from prejudice", *The Hindu* wrote in 1895, "and its sincere advocacy of the Indian cause is well and widely known. The pro-Indian attitude of our contemporary enhances the value of its opinion." Nirad C. Chaudhuri said that the *Statesman* had replaced Macaulay among the Bengalis in their worship of fine English. "If you want to write good English, read the *Statesman*, our elders and teachers admonished us."

Robert Knight, who founded the *Statesman* in 1875 (as we have noted in an earlier chapter) was one of the early British journalists, who like Silk Buckingham, encouraged critical review of the government's actions and policies which set him apart from other British-owned papers which while supporting the government steadfastly also indulged in denunciation of Indians and specially the nationalists. Knight welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. "The Congress needs no other justification than the

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truism that if the people of India are ever to enter upon a course of real progress, it can only be by their learning to govern themselves," he wrote. "No people can make any solid or enduring progress under any system of government which does not devolve upon them more or less completely the responsibility for their own advancement. In India, we have, unwittingly and unfortunately, set up what is perhaps the very worst form of government that the civilised world has yet seen . . . . But the time for reform has come and while India will, we hope and believe, escape the sufferings and sacrifices by which the American colonists achieved their freedom, it is the primary duty of her educated sons—a duty to Englishmen as well as to themselves—that they should use every means in their power to awaken their rulers to the fact that no people can ever make solid or lasting progress under a system of government such as that exists in India . . . . It is not revolution that the Congress asks for but reforms that is as urgently needed in our own interests as theirs." Knight passed away in 1890.

The *Statesman*, which was described as the *Manchester Guardian* of the East, has had a long line of able and dedicated editors who have left their mark deep on it. There were many occasions when it got into trouble with the government. On one such occasion, Gokhale had to use his influence to rescue its editor, Samuel Ratcliffe, from government displeasure. This happened during the viceroyalty of Lord Minto. The paper had published a secret minute of Lord Curzon on the partition of Bengal and the Home Department withdrew from it government advertisements and other privileges as a punishment. Gokhale spoke to Dunlop Smith, private secretary to the viceroy, who helped to arrange an interview for Ratcliffe with the Home Member, Arundel. The *Statesman* published an apology and the government withdrew the ban.

During the turbulent days of 1930 and later when the freedom struggle was at its height, the *Statesman* came under fire from the nationalists. Describing the situation, James Cowley wrote : "An attempt on the life of the editor, Sir Alfred Watson, was made. They were turbulent times. The

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Swadeshi campaign was rapidly gathering momentum, bullets flew, and home-made bombs exploded, disturbingly often with lethal effect and the toll of heads broken by the ubiquitous iron-shod *lathi* was beyond count. The *Statesman* had incurred the activists' ire partly because of its allegedly unhelpful attitude to nationalist aspirations and partly because in those days the paper was British-owned which made its stance doubly offensive to many people."

The *Statesman* in the twenties represented what we now call the rightist point of view. It was both conservative and liberal ; conservative in the sense that it wanted the country and people to conserve their best traditions and liberal in the sense that it reflected an attitude free from dogmas and prejudices. To the nationalists and fighters for freedom, however, it was the mouthpiece of British imperialism and of the British community in India. Even so, there were few nationalists and freedom fighters who did not read it daily. Its editorials were scrutinised and analysed by people holding diverse political views.

Malcolm Muggeridge came to India as an assistant editor of the *Statesman* during this period and he was not happy. "I should never have come," he wrote. "I am obsessed with the feeling that I am on the wrong side . . . and though I know what the Indian nationalist movement amounts to, it pricks my conscience sometimes to read Congress news-papers." He lived in a flat above the *Statesman* office with Wordsworth who was acting editor. Wordsworth, who claimed to be a descendant of the great poet and had gravitated from the Indian Educational Service to journalism, was a "short, plump, pasty man who had all the correct liberal views and attitudes of mind believing that it would be possible through constitutional changes to transform the British Raj peacefully into a Westminster style self-governing democracy . . . . His soft persistence in upholding such views led me to go out of my way to pour scorn and ridicule on them..." Muggeridge was convinced that there could be only one outcome in India—the British would have to go. "And yet they themselves, in their clubs and offices, on their polo grounds and tennis courts, were serenely convinced that with some adjustments

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here and there, the Raj, in one form or another, would go on for centuries yet. A favourite saying among them was that if the British left within six months, the Indians would be down on their knees begging them to come back." Muggeridge was posted to Simla as special correspondent and he was introduced to the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, at one of his parties. The viceroy told Muggeridge : "People were inclined to think that India was difficult to govern, but I have found it almost ridiculously easy. You just have to be nice with these fellers and they respond. That, at least, has been my experience. I doubt if there is in all the world an easier country to govern than India."

This was Muggeridge's description of how correspondents functioned in Simla, headquarters of the Government of India : "Journalists follow authority as sharks do a liner hoping to feed off the waste it discharges with perhaps someone occasionally falling overboard to make a meal and once in a way the whole ship going down and providing a positive feast. There was a little band of us swimming along in the wake of the Government of India . . . . Public relations as we know it today, was in its infancy but already the Government of India had its spokesman whom we constantly pursued for handouts and leakages and to arrange interviews. Among other useful services, we made a point of mastering the first names of Indians who were going to be knighted . . . . I doubt if any government has ever existed so cut off from the governed as the Government of India nestling among the Himalayas in Simla.

Wordsworth under whom Muggeridge served was notorious for his absentmindedness. On one occasion the news editor was surprised by his enquiry whether he worked there. The news editor said he had been news editor for some years. "I doubt it," Wordsworth said but did not say why. On another occasion, he summoned the news editor to his room and handed him a newspaper with his markings in red pencil and comments like "disgraceful", "criminal grammar", etc. The news editor told him that the newspaper which had provoked his comments was not the *Statesman* but a rival paper. "God bless my soul," Wordsworth said, "don't take

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any note of all that." Muggeridge's stay in India was very brief.

There were two great editors of the *Statesman*, Arthur Moore and Ian Stephens, who earned the admiration and gratitude of the Indian people by their sympathy and support for their political aspirations and for highlighting their legitimate grievances. We shall write about Moore separately for he deserves a whole chapter to himself. Ian Stephens who succeeded Moore in 1942, was an unconventional editor. He cycled to his office in khaki shorts, singlet and chappals followed on another cycle by his bodyguard with a change of clothing.

Stephens' greatest achievement was to expose the horrors of the Bengal famine in 1946 through revealing pictures and gruesome stories day after day in the *Statesman* which made him unpopular in government circles in Simla. He did all a man could do to assuage human suffering on a massive scale and certainly brought the Government of India to its senses. The story is told that once when seeking an interview in the capital he wrote his name on the back of a particularly revolting famine picture and sent it in as his visiting card. In 1950, Stephens was in fear of assassination for some weeks and was guarded day and night by plainclothes police. "It was an occupational hazard for a *Statesman* editor," he said.

For many years the *Statesman* published on the edit page an article by a Muslim contributor under the pseudonym Shahed. The identity of Shahed was kept a closely guarded secret. Stephens did not know who he was even five years after he joined the paper and for several weeks after he became editor. "He was as much a mystery man to me as to the public," he said, "I then only discovered his identity by accident and thereafter had strong reason for secrecy." The mysterious contributor was Altaf Hussain, who was then in the service of the Government of India and who later became editor of the *Dawn*, the organ of the Muslim League. His articles in the *Statesman* provoked great controversy and were responsible for creating bitter feelings towards the paper among the nationalists.

On August 15, 1947, the *Statesman* wrote: "Now is the

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appointed day. Now is the day of salvation. If we start right, we can continue right. On everyone of us who live in India, be it in the Indian Union or Pakistan, there is a personal responsibility to start this day with our thoughts right . . . . It is the fitting climax of the intertwined story of Britain and India, the fulfilment of Britain's mission, a mission carried out under God's blessing with many failures to sense its greatness, with some inevitable personal yieldings to the lure of pomp and circumstance of pride and glory of the world and the love of money, but for all that a mission writ in the stars of the East and West and discharged from the British throne and the High Court of Parliament downwards with a large and steady faithfulness, through ever rarer good report and ever increasing ill-report. Now the day has come and what was British India is resolved into two states. Let us waste no tears on that. The essential thing is to preserve and foster the unity of systems and of outlook that exists." Stephens, as we have noted already, resigned in 1951 as he disagreed with the Kashmir policy of the Government of India. The *Statesman* progressively changed into Indian hands and today it is a fully Indian-owned and Indian-edited newspaper.

When the *Statesman* celebrated its centenary in 1975, it wrote : "The *Statesman* has seen every development towards Indian independence, the Minto-Morley reforms, the Montagu-Chelmsford ones, the movements of Tilak, Gandhi, Subhas Bose and others. Its opinions have not always been popular though it was the first paper which Nehru used to read in the morning. But it has almost always been respected. Its technical standards have been high : for many years, for instance, either the Calcutta or the Delhi edition annually carried off the president's award for printing; several of its features, including the correspondence columns, have been rated by many competent judges as the finest in the country."

The *Statesman* was one of the papers which suffered during the Emergency for its anti-government postures. Today, it is a vigorous independent paper, fearlessly voicing its views on all questions affecting the common man and some of its investigative stories have achieved national prominence.

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The Times of India

The *Times of India* is the oldest English daily in India and it is also a great newspaper which has played an important role in the development of journalism in this country. Before the advent of freedom and especially in the closing years of the last century and the beginning of this century, it had been a controversial newspaper which had stood as a bulwark of colonial rule and had nothing but contempt for Indians and their aspirations to freedom. It belonged to the class of British-owned newspapers which was described by one historian as those newspapers which were not "a model of sobriety and good manners. Their slighting and supercilious tone towards educated Indians wounded and alienated sensitive people." *The Hindu* wrote in 1900 : "The *Englishman*, the *Pioneer* and the *Times of India* are three well-known organs of Anglo-Indian opinion which most violently oppose the advancement of the Indian people. Much of the harsh treatment which of late we have received from our rulers is due to their incitement and in the future Indian reforms, we apprehend much trouble from these and other champions of the dominant class." It wrote again in 1909 : "Most of the Anglo-Indian papers seem to consider themselves the watchdogs of the British Government in this country. They always take a high and mighty tone with the alleged delinquencies of Indians and think it their special mission to egg on the government to take this action or that."

In a vituperative attack on Indians in 1900, the *Times of India* wrote : "Mr Ranade's (Mahadev Govind Ranade, judge of the Bombay High Court) experience as a judge must have convinced him long ago that the people of this country set no value upon truth for its own sake. Indeed, the average Hindu lies by preference. Sentiments, however lofty and ennobling are thrown away upon people who are dead to the rudiments of virtue. Widow re-marriage, *sati*, polygamy, child marriage, all these are surface blemishes, symptoms and signs of the profoundly deepseated canker at the heart of Indian life—its hopeless want of honesty—its unexplained [illegible]

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of the people are brought up in an atmosphere of lies. From the cradle to the grave, they are shadowed by the habits of lying and servility."

We have already seen in an earlier chapter how Robert Knight became editor of the *Bombay Times* and merging in it two other newspapers, renamed it *Times of India* in 1861. The first issue of the *Bombay Times*, a bi-weekly, appeared on November 3, 1838. Its editor was J.E. Brennan, a retired Irish doctor who was also secretary of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce. He wrote in the first issue on the need for education of the people of India "whose capacity for improvement is inferior to that of no one elsewhere", but who he thought were "spellbound victims of ignorance and delusion." A later editor, George Buist, roused Indian sentiment by inciting other newspapers to demand reprisals against the Indians after the Mutiny in 1857. The government did nothing to restrain him but when a Parsi shareholder, Nowroji Furdonji, objected, Buist was eventually dismissed. The *Bombay Times* had many Indian shareholders from 1850 to 1859 when Knight bought them. Under the editorship of Thomas J. Bennett, who later became the sole proprietor of the *Times of India*, the paper maintained close relations with Indians many of whom contributed to its columns. Bennett vastly improved the paper by bringing talented people from England among whom was a master printer, F.M. Coleman, who had wide experience of daily newspaper production.

With its high class printing and news service (it was the earliest newspaper in India to subscribe to Reuter's news service) the *Times of India* made rapid progress and in 1890 it printed daily 3000 copies. Indian subscribers were small in number because free public libraries served their needs. According to one writer, two circulating libraries between themselves took up one-third of the daily output of the paper at reduced rates. The copies were distributed to one class of subscribers at 6 a.m. : they were taken from them at 9 a.m. and passed on to a second group and then to a third group at noon. They were collected for a fourth time and "after ironing the well thumped copies were posted to upcountry

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places." The *Times of India* in 1870 asked its readers to contribute items of interest and regular contributors were rewarded with a free copy of the paper. One observer of the period wrote : "The newspapers were never dull. When nothing outside deserved notice, editors started quarrelling among themselves which they pursued with rigour and diligence." Bennett and Coleman combined and formed a company called Bennett-Coleman Company which continues even today although it has changed into Indian hands. Bennett brought experienced journalists from England to edit the paper and they included Lovat Fraser and Sir Stanley Reed. Pat Lovett wrote in 1883, when he joined the paper, that it consisted of an editor, an assistant editor, a sub-editor, a chief reporter (all brought from England) and four reporters recruited locally, two of them Parsis.

In the wake of the partition of Bengal there was a spurt of violence and the British-owned press screamed for strong government action. It set itself to be a defender of the government and its technique was to snipe at Indians, both extremists and moderates. The government was in a mood to ignore their lapses from good taste and journalistic ethics. When the *Times of India* was hauled up for contempt of court during the trial of Tilak for sedition in 1897, it was let off with a warning. Commenting on the articles in the British-owned press, Gokhale wrote : "The terms of race arrogance and contempt in which some of these newspapers constantly speak of Indians and specially of educated Indians cut into the mind more than the lash can into the flesh. . . . I would like to see the official who would dare to arrest and march to the police *thana* the editor of an Anglo-Indian newspaper. But so far as Indian editors are concerned, there are, I fear, officers in this country who would not be sorry to march whole battalions of them to the police *thana*."

The *Times of India* suffered serious loss of face in 1905 when an editorial writer or some imp of mischief played a dirty trick on it. A newspaper reprinted an article which it said had appeared in the *Times of India* and it was a condemnation of Lord Curzon, the viceroy. It began : "One might

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well wish that Lord Curzon had not returned to India for the second time for he could not have chosen a more effective way of wrecking his reputation than he has done." The article was reprinted by more and more newspapers and the *Times of India* which had always considered Curzon as its hero, was embarrassed. It issued a contradiction but even then the article continued to be reprinted, both in India and England. At the Surat session of the Congress in 1907, which ended in confusion, a representative of the *Times of India*, Pears, who covered the proceedings for his paper, was manhandled and suffered injuries. When the president of the session, Rash Behari Ghosh was in physical danger, it was Pears who escorted him black to the pavilion.

The *Times of India's* favourite target in the early years of the century was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the Congress leader in Bombay. In 1901, during a debate on a land revenue bill in the Bombay Legislative Council. Mehta, Gokhale and others staged a walk-out which caused surprise because it was considered strange for Moderates to indulge in that kind of protest. The *Times of India*, in an editorial written by Lovat Fraser (Mehta's bitter enemy) made fun of Mehta and his friends. It wrote : "It is difficult to contemplate seriously the spectacle of Mehta striding towards the door in order to emphasise the novel theory that the duty of the true patriot is to run away while the gentlemen who rather sheepishly stole after him only excites feelings of compassionate amusement. Mr Mehta does not often make tactical mistakes but he blundered rather badly in his pre-arranged exit from the council hall. Meant to be dramatic, his performance was merely comic. . . . He forgot, too, that little scenes of this description should at least convey the idea of spontaneity ; whereas a good many people knew beforehand what was going to happen. It is a risky experiment for public men to take to historionics towards the end of their careers." In an earlier editorial, the paper complimented Mehta and his associates on their proficiency in the English language. Commenting on the speeches made at a meeting addressed by Mehta and others, it said at least two or three of the speakers "displayed knowledge of the English

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language in its more subtle aspects which is gratifying to those of us who believe that there is a great intellectual future before the leading Indian races. Indeed, three of the creators on the occasion, Messrs Telang, Badruddin and Mehta, showed themselves to possess as great a mastery of our somewhat difficult idioms as Cicero ever did of the Greek, accomplishment on which the foremost Roman orator rather prided himself."

K. Rama Rao who served as a sub-editor of the *Times of India* in the 1920s wrote that "subject to the natural limitations of a European-owned institution, there was freedom from race prejudice, certainly on the editorial side." Once, he recalled, "a European official walked into the sub-editors' room with a communique announcing the release of Gandhi. He was so much surprised at the presence of so many Indians that the next day he confronted the editor in his club and in the presence of others called the *Times of India* a "Black man's show". The editor complained to the governor and the official had to apologise. On another occasion, Sir Stanley Reed, editor, wrote that every Englishman in India was ashamed of the deeds of General Dyer at Amritsar (General Dyer was responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre). A section of the Europeans in Bombay was offended and it was reported there was a plan to give a "sound thrashing to the impudent journalist who had let down his country." A timely hint enabled Reed to keep out of the club until tempers cooled down.

It was a complete paper, Rama Rao wrote, "carrying the highest prestige in particular for its sports and commercial coverage. It carried more Indian news than many Indian papers." The two basic principles which governed the *Times of India*, according to Rama Rao, were that the King's Government must be carried on and the political susceptibilities of the Indian people must be respected. Among the editors, S.T. Sheppard was one who was kind to the staff and stood up for their rights. During the editorship of Sir Francis Low, which saw a climax in the battle for freedom and a confrontation between the press and the government, the *Times of India* touched heights it had not reached before and according to Rama Rao it outstripped other papers in point of

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circulation and volume of news printed. Frank Moraes became the first Indian editor when freedom came. The *Times of India* passed into Indian hands in 1946. Its sister journal, the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, started in 1888 is today one of the major weeklies and a host of other journals in Marathi, Hindi and English have been added to the group including the *Economic Times* (1961) which was the first daily dealing with financial and economic news to be published in India. The *Times of India* today occupies a premier position and it has the second largest circulation among English dailies, according to *Press in India*, 1984.

The Tribune

Gandhi said in 1932: "The *Tribune* is the best viewspaper . . . . Its editor's reading and analysis of events are unsurpassed." He said of its great editor, Kalinath Ray: "Long live Kalinath Ray! His articles nowadays on the communal problem and on joint electorates for Harijans bear witness to his deep knowledge and wide experience." Kalinath Ray was to the *Tribune* what G. Subramania Aiyer and Kasturiranga Iyengar were to *The Hindu* and Motilal Ghosh to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. He was a Bengali who had worked on Surendranath Bannerjee's *Bengalee* in Calcutta before he came to Lahore in 1917 to take over editorship of the *Tribune*. He was a fearless writer who bravely faced the risks involved in fighting the strongly entrenched alien government. His fierce attacks on the Punjab Government and on General Dyer, hero of Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 led to his being arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. On appeal, however, it was reduced to three months. Ray had his differences with Gandhi. He did not believe in non-violence and the methods adopted by Gandhi to achieve freedom but he was a good Congressman and took an active part in the freedom struggle. He told Mulk Raj Anand, the novelist: "We Bengalis do not agree with Gandhi that India can win freedom with non-violence. We can embarrass the government with non-cooperation. But they will not go with our *dharnas*. Some of our young students

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have turned terrorists. . . . You know one of the men who threw the bomb at Lord Hardinge in 1911 was a Bengali called Rash Behari. . . . He escaped to Japan afterwards. And one of our writers, Sarat Chandra, has written a novel lauding the gospel of tit for tat." Mulk Raj Anand said he had heard that Rabindranath Tagore did not approve of Gandhi's non-violence. Ray said: "Yes, he says that the illiterate people in a non-violent *dharna* may not remain non-violent. The natural thing men do is to defend themselves. Only the Jains are supine and Gandhi is from Gujarat where Jainism is still practised." Ray added after some thought: "I wish I had the courage to do something more than write editorials."

Amolok Ram, a former editor, has said that Ray who edited the *Tribune* for 28 years was known for his uprightness, integrity, sobriety and independence. He did not allow his judgment to be influenced by personal or sectarian considerations. Nor did he brook any interference, internal or external in the conduct of the paper. "Intensely patriotic as he was, he wrote with passion and vehemence but his views were based on reason and fairness," Amolok Ram said. "It was a treat to read his analytical editorials particularly at a time when the British bureaucracy was out to suppress all patriotic aspirations." Kali Babu, as he was affectionately called by his admirers, was generally disinclined to meet any V.I.P. He rarely attended any social function. He had a deep insight into the affairs of state and the working of various political organisations. He differed from Gandhi on certain aspects of the non-cooperation programme and expressed his opinion candidly and freely. But he had a high regard for those with whom he happened to differ. In spite of his differences, he gave unrelenting support to Gandhi in the long and arduous fight for freedom. Although the *Tribune* was an uncompromising critic of British rule, Ray commanded great respect even among the British bureaucrats of the day. He maintained the highest journalist standards. He did not indulge in character assassination, nor in hitting below the belt. J.N. Sahni who served under him says that Ray *was* the *Tribune*. He wrote the entire editorial page and sometimes his writing

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overflowed into another page. "Whatever he wrote was logical, scintillating and convincing." A.C. Bali, special representative of the *Tribune*, told a story about Jawaharlal Nehru and Ray. Nehru had come to Lahore once in the course of a tour of the Punjab. He asked Bali why the *Tribune* took particular care to call him Mr. Nehru or Pandit Nehru. Why could it not call him just Jawaharlal Nehru as in the case of Stalin or Churchill ? Ray's reply when he was told about this was that Nehru had not yet attained the heights which Stalin or Churchill had in the international sphere.

Ray emerged with chronic asthma from prison and never recovered. He passed away in 1943 and the *Tribune* passed through many ups and downs until the final calamity in 1947 when, on the eve of independence, two of its staff members were stabbed and the publication of the paper in Lahore was suspended.

The *Tribune* was started as a weekly in Lahore in 1881 by Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia who was a great admirer of Raja Ram Mohun Roy and the Brahmo Samaj. He was helped by Surendranath Bannerjee to buy a printing press and choose the first editor, Sital Kanta Chatterjee of Dacca. The *Tribune*, which became a daily in 1906 had a number of Bengalis as its editors in its early career, including Kalinath Ray. Bipin Chandra Pal was its editor for some time in the early years. A great philanthropist and prominent nationalist of northern India, Sardar Dayal Singh established a trust for the *Tribune* which continues to function till today. In its first issue on February 2, 1881, the *Tribune* said: "The aim of the *Tribune* will be, as its name imparts, fairly and temperately to advance the cause of the mute masses. . . . We shall strive as much as lies in the compass of our humble abilities to create and educate such opinion." The progress of the *Tribune* was intertwined with the country's political and social history and especially of the north-western region which at one time extended from Peshawar to Delhi and from Quetta to Karachi. It wielded great influence in the region comprising the North-West Frontier Province, the pre-partition of Punjab, Sind and Delhi. From its inception, it succeeded in making itself a recognised

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organ of public opinion. It often clashed with the British rulers who were determined to suppress the freedom movement but it stood like a rock in the performance of its duty to educate the people and inculcate in them the spirit of patriotism and resistance to oppression and tyranny. It earned the reputation of being a fearless champion of the cause of the people and of freedom.

On the eve of independence when Punjab was partitioned, riots rocked Lahore and a mob attacked the office of the *Tribune*. Two members of the staff were killed, the printing machinery, building and land were lost. The paper suspended publication. In a telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel, home minister, the manager of the paper, said: "*Tribune* Lahore has lost property, cash, machinery, newsprint etc., worth Rs. 25 lakhs. Newsprint worth Rs. 2 lakhs removed under orders of the West Punjab Government to government printing press, Lahore. Our van and six typewriters have also been given over to *Pakistan Times*. Our press and office have been sealed by the government. I learn that our press and building are being given to *Pakistan Times*." Patel asked the Rehabilitation Minister, K.C. Neogy, to give all facilities to the *Tribune* to resume publication from Indian soil. The *Tribune* had opposed partition but when it became a *fait accompli*, its trustees decided to continue to publish it from Lahore and its editor wrote an editorial supporting Jinnah's views. Jinnah appreciated the *Tribune's* stand but the chaos and anarchy that followed partition left no option for the paper and it moved to Simla and later to Ambala in May, 1948. The paper's rehabilitation was unexpectedly rapid and the support it received from the people was phenomenal, said Amolok Ram, its editor.

The *Tribune* moved to its present home in Chandigarh in 1969. The paper, whose editor then was Madhavan Nair, got into trouble with the Government of India during the Emergency in 1975. It was one of the three papers blacklisted by the government and denied advertisements and other facilities. Two sister papers, one in Punjabi and the other in Hindi (*Punjabi Tribune* and *Dainik Tribune*) were started in 1978 and were an instant success. In the words of Sudhir

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"Apart from the high standard of integrity shown by its editors ever since the paper was founded, the *Tribune* has built up a rare tradition for fairplay, restraint and courageous pursuit of truth. This has been possible to a considerable extent also because of a succession of able managers (who resisted pressures from the advertisers' lobby) and the understanding shown by the trustees. . . . The present Editor-in-Chief, Prem Bhatia, has not only preserved but also enhanced the reputation of the paper as a fearless exponent of public opinion and an understanding critic of the government."

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14

THE GIANTS

B.G. Horniman

The battle for freedom was fought as much with the pen as with the weapon of *Satyagraha*. Editors of Indian newspapers used their pens like sharp swords to harass the alien government and to make deep thrusts at their vulnerable points to expose their oppression and exploitation. They inspired and encouraged freedom fighters and gathered support for them. They were patriots and their patriotism bordered on fanaticism. They were crusaders in the fight for independence and they made sacrifices and suffered privations (including imprisonment) unheard of in the annals of journalism of any country in the world. There were giants among them who have found a place in the roll of honour of India's freedom. There were two foreigners in their ranks, one an Englishman who made India his home and was called a traitor by his countrymen, and the other an Irishman who edited a British owned newspaper and proved a great embarrassment to the British rulers. One of them, B.G. Horniman is the subject of this chapter.

Horniman came to India in the early years of this century as an assistant editor of the *Statesman*. He was the son of a former paymaster-in-chief of the British navy and the brother of a rear-admiral and a famous actor. He was a staunch advocate of Indian independence and was soon disgusted with the uncongenial atmosphere of Chowringhee (Calcutta) where the *Statesman* was printed. He resigned his job in 1912. Recommending him to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta who was in search of an editor for his newly started *Bombay Chronicle*, Surendranath Bannerjee wrote: "I may assure you that

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Horniman is as good an Indian as myself. During the days of the partition of Bengal he used to walk with us barefooted through the streets of Calcutta with a shawl on his broad white shoulders."

Before Horniman arrived in Bombay and took charge of the *Bombay Chronicle* in 1913, vigorous, dynamic public life was unknown. What public activity there was centred round the chambers of Mehta and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. One commentator says: "Bombay got inspiration, advice and drive from the new editor who wrested for her a permanent position in Indian politics." An Englishman as editor of an Indian newspaper necessarily had to work under great strain but Horniman had the advantage of professionalism which made him an expert. There had been British champions of the Indian cause before and after Horniman but none as eminent for personal identification with the causes he took up and for the vigour with which he pursued them. To his qualities as a trained journalist he added emotional involvement in the fight for Indian freedom. He was an indefatigable worker active in public life and in movements for relief to the people. By his incessant attacks on the British owned press he shook the *Times of India* (which virtually enjoyed a monopoly until the arrival of the *Chronicle*) out of its smugness and exposed its anti-Indian views and race prejudice. It soon became a habit for the citizens of Bombay to read the *Chronicle* the first thing in the morning. As one writer remarked: "It supplied them their war cry. The fascination lay in the editor's nationality. A radical outlook, a consciousness and feeling born of right and a ruthless exposure of evil were the dominant features of Horniman's writings." An European bureaucrat said of him: "I hate Horniman though I can't help admiring his articles which are a tonic." The officials branded him a traitor to his motherland. .

Referring to this, Horniman said: "They (his enemies) read every line I write. They read between the lines and above them, underneath them and in all sorts of positions but they couldn't catch me." Horniman, as president of the Bombay Journalists Association led a deputation to the viceroy early

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in 1916 to protest against the misuse of the Press Act of 1910. Other members of the deputation included C.Y. Chintamani, S.N. Bannerjee and Pandit Malviya. The viceroy's reply was not satisfactory but the deputation had the satisfaction of utilising the occasion to give wide publicity to the misdeeds of the government (central and provincial). Horniman's relations with the Board of Directors of the *Chronicle* were not happy and he was in frequent conflict with it. It was dominated by Moderates but as long as Mehta was alive, things went on smoothly; with his passing away, Horniman began to feel the strain much more. Although he protested again and again against the interference of the Board with editorial policy, he was unable to make his voice felt. Annie Besant wrote to him that it was wrong to allow his independence of expression to be curtailed by a "stupid Board of Directors". "In your place", she said, "I would tell them frankly that either I edit as I like or I resign." Horniman had close relations with Besant and when she was interned in 1917 he went to Madras to edit her paper, *New India*, until P.K. Telang, acting editor took over. The Board of Directors of which Sir Chimanlal Setalvad was the chairman did not approve of his support for the Home Rule Movement started by Besant.

When Edwin Montagu, secretary of state for India, visited India in 1917 in connection with constitutional reforms, the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, had made arrangements to accommodate him and his party in tents on the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge in old Delhi instead of offering rooms in the Lodge itself. Horniman protested in the columns of the *Chronicle* against what he called "this snobbery" of an English aristocrat who, Horniman said, thought it below his dignity to put up in his house a commoner who happened to be a Jew. Horniman's protest was taken up by other papers throughout India. Chelmsford offered an apology and said that no insult was meant. He said owing to lack of accommodation in the Viceregal Lodge and for Montagu's own convenience, he had decided to give him separate quarters. Horniman refused to be convinced by this explanation and did not abate his criticism of the viceroy. Later, when Horniman met Montagu in the

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presence of Chelmsford, Montagu defended Chelmsford and chided Horniman for taking up the cudgels on his behalf. Horniman replied: "I admire your extreme courtesy to your not very cordial host, but I still maintain that respecting the traditions of India, he had better given you, even at some personal inconvenience, accommodation in the Viceregal Lodge."

In 1919, Horniman wrote almost daily on the Punjab atrocities under Martial Law and exposed the abuse of power and the humiliation imposed on the people. As one observer of the scene remarked: "His articles struck terror in the hearts of bureaucrats as they read them morning after morning. One reader described the *Chronicle* as "an appetiser to a hearty meal for the public and a paper which destroyed the appetite of the government and its sycophants. It was inspiring in its candid criticism of both the government and the Moderates. Every time they read the *Chronicle* they could not help jumping in their chairs." Horniman's tussle with the Board became acute and one day it reached the crisis point. The board tried to dictate to Horniman what he should write and what he should not. Horniman refused to be dictated to and resigned. He announced the resignation in the paper itself. His resignation created a commotion among his readers and angry crowds invaded the *Chronicle* office and demanded the recall of Horniman. The Board asked N.M. Samath, a leading Moderate, to reorganise the paper and he called in Pothan Joseph, a talented writer who had earlier served as assistant editor in a number of papers, to take charge. The circulation of the paper began to fall rapidly and the Board resigned. Setalvad relinquished control of the paper and a new Board was formed with M.A. Jinnah as chairman. Horniman was recalled. Pothan Joseph remained as assistant editor and Syed Abdullah Brelvi, who was a sub-editor, was made an assistant editor. Horniman was, however, not to be in the *Chronicle* for long. The Bombay Government was out to take action against him for his articles on the Punjab. In his own words: "Lord Lloyd (government) and his secretariat gang pored and pored over every *Chronicle* file until DORA (Defence of the

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Realm Act) came to their rescue and I was bundled off." Horniman was deported in April 1919. He was then recovering from an operation. He was removed to a ship in the harbour and sent back home.

Gandhi presided over a protest meeting of Bombay citizens in June, 1919, which urged the government to revoke the deportation order. Gandhi said: "Mr. Horniman is a very brave and generous Englishman. He has given us the *mantram*—Liberty. He has fearlessly exposed the wrong wherever he has seen it and thus has been an ornament to the race to which he belongs and rendered it a great service. Every Indian knows his services to India. The continuance of the *Chronicle* without Mr. Horniman would be like an attempt to sustain the body when the soul has departed. The national cause will certainly feel hurt to find that one who presented it with a daily draught of Liberty is no more in its midst." Gandhi said he did not agree on many occasions with what Horniman wrote and said, he thought the language used by him was more suited to a Western than an Eastern country. But the question was one of liberty of the press and liberty of public speech and it was for this reason that they wanted the deportation order to be revoked.

Defending the action against Horniman Montagu said in the House of Commons: "We have been very patient with Horniman. In no case has there been a better example of our reluctance to interfere with mere eccentricities of political belief. But when this gentleman began to use his paper in the middle of the riots resulting in loss of life to spread and fan the flames and opened his columns to an accusation that British troops had been using soft-nosed bullets in the streets of Delhi and when his paper was being distributed free to British troops in Bombay in the hope of exciting disaffection and insubordination, why, then, I say, it was high time he left India." He added: "An Englishman, upon whom far greater responsibility certainly rests, cannot be tolerated in India if he is responsible for the occurrences which we associate with Mr. Horniman."

Horniman defeated himself through the columns of the

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Manchester Guardian. He wrote: "Though the government was strongly criticised as it deserved and the strongest protest was made in my paper regarding the public flogging of people in streets, the dropping of bombs on unarmed crowds, machine-gunning of demonstrators without adequate provocation, the whole of my personal influence and that of my paper—neither of which is inconsiderable—were used in support of restoration of order and the inculcation of the doctrine and practice of *Satyagraha*—the very negation of violence—both before and during the disturbances that occurred." In a letter to the *Chronicle* in September, 1919, he related the circumstances under which he was deported. He was ill, he said, and under doctor's orders after an operation not to leave the house, when the police came and asked him to pack up. He was carried from his house to an ambulance and placed on board the ship.

Horniman returned to India early in 1926, defying a government order, by way of Colombo and according to one writer: "His journey from Dhanushkodi to Bombay was a triumphal march." He became the editor of the *Sentinel*, a sister evening daily of the *Chronicle*. He also wrote a column in the *Chronicle* under the pseudonym, Atropos, which he used to attack the government and the Moderates. He called the *Times of India* "the Old Woman of Bori Bunder" which became famous. As editor of the *Sentinel* he became the *bete noire* of the police for his exposures of gambling in the city. He was trapped in a police raid while investigating and was hauled up before a magistrate like an ordinary felon. The chief Presidency magistrate acquitted him and took the police to task for their treatment of him. Even the *Times of India* was forced to condemn the police action and demand an enquiry. In 12 articles after his acquittal, titled, "I accuse the police", Horniman charged the police with deliberately staging the raid and organising mass arrests merely to trap him and parade him before the public as a gambler. He had an amazing knowledge of the law and of "lawless laws" and this helped him to keep out of trouble. He always appeared in court without a lawyer and conducted his own defence. His articles in the *Chronicle* and the *Indian Daily Mail* during the *Satyagraha*

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movement in 1932 resulted in security being demanded from these papers by the government. "Horniman has done the work of 100 leaders", said a prominent Congressman. His sense of news was disconcerting to his opponents in the profession. He was the *guru* of over a dozen journalists who have made good in Indian journalism. He was temperamental and this created several crises in his career. In the words of a writer: "He became at once the proud master and pitiless slave of his temperament. It also invested him with a uniqueness of strength unknown to the majority of men." K. Rama Rao, who was one of his disciples, wrote: "He was a great chief. In a few words he would give instructions that illumined the sub-editor's or the reporter's path. Sitting in his room he gathered Bombay's political strings in his hands and knew all that was happening politically, noble as well as ignoble."

"I shall not set down my pen, he said on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his entry into the profession, "until the freedom of India is achieved." "He was a school of journalism himself; taught many aspirants and saw several of them seated in editorial chairs. Stern and unbending were his political convictions, whatever his weakness otherwise. He had a genius to make history, not merely record it, whether he was participating in the Bengal anti-partition demonstrations in the early decades of the century or throwing out a reactionary Board of Directors and replacing them by men of his choice; whether he was being deported from his sick bed or was returning to India to a hero's welcome; whether he was founding, editing or killing newspapers or defying the tin gods of bureaucracy; whether he was defying the High Court or needling a home member. He had a positive genius for lampooning the government and its overzealous minions and yet circumventing the law cleverly. He was justly proud of his sound judgment which the gods give only to their favourites. He was a lovable, adorable person and his colleagues called him, 'Governor'. He could rifle our pockets at leisure and we his. He ate no salt and only beetroot sugar for the sake of his throat. He argued his own cases and once expounded in court the startling doctrine that he had a right to travel

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first class on trains because no accommodation was available in the second. He dressed like a peacock, whoever paid the bills. He occasionally wore the *dhoti*. He spoke brilliantly on the platform and he wrote like an angel but could not, unlike some of us smaller fry, dictate an article. He invariably wrote it out. He spent money faster than he earned it and innumerable were the pirates and parasites around him."

After Horniman was deported in 1919, the *Bombay Chronicle* was placed under official censorship. The directors asked Gandhi to take over the conduct of the paper but before he could do so, the paper suspended publication following the forfeiture of the security of Rs. 10,000 deposited when the pre-censorship was imposed. When the paper resumed publication, S.A. Brelvi was appointed editor. The *Chronicle* went through a financial crisis which was aggravated when a libel suit was filed against the company which owned the paper and heavy damages were awarded. The company went into liquidation. The paper was purchased by Belgaumwala who sold it to N.M. Cama who formed the Associated Paper Company. Brelvi brought a measure of stability to the paper and it played a notable part in the freedom movement. Both the *Chronicle* and *Sentinel* closed down in 1959.

Arthur Moore

Arthur Moore belonged to that rare species of editors who have a mind of their own and do not care what others think about it. Moore enjoyed in letting people in high positions in government or in politics know what he thought, and what he thought and wrote was not always palatable to the parties for whom it was intended. He was an unconventional editor and the *Statesman* which he adorned for 10 years from the editorial chair was not always happy with him. K.P.S. Menon, the veteran diplomat, said: "Arthur Moore was no respector of persons. Some VIPs disliked him and he reciprocated their sentiments cordially. On the whole, he was regarded by the Establishment as a difficult person to deal with."

Moore succeeded Alfred Watson as editor of the *Statesman*

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in 1932. Watson was the target of terrorist attack twice and he was injured in the second attempt when he was shot at by a young terrorist. The attacks were a sequel to some articles published in the *Statesman* and according to Muggeridge who had just then joined the paper, as an assistant editor, they had been written by Moore. Watson resigned his job and returned home. "Moore's mercurial temperament", Muggeridge wrote, "took him from the out and out imperialist position which might have cost Watson his life and did cost him his job, to one of close affinity with the Swarajists. He was a gifted, unstable, northern Irishman fated to make a mess of his career, not through being too rigid—which is one way of doing it—but through being flexible—which is another."

Muggeridge found that Moore "disliked the view I expressed in my leaders no less than Wordsworth (who acted as editor in Moore's absence) did. So it was a relief to all the three of us when it was decided that I should go to Simla and represent the paper during the summer months when the Government of India functioned there." Before he came to India, Moore had worked as a reporter on the *Times* of London and was considered an authority on Balkan and Persian affairs. He served as the *Times*' correspondent in Persia (Iran) for some years. He came to India in 1924 and joined the *Statesman* as an assistant editor.

His most famous brush with authority was during the viceroyalty of Lord Linlithgow to whom he was like a red rag to a bull. In 1937 there was a constitutional deadlock in the provinces where the Congress had been returned in a majority in the elections to the Legislative Assembly. The Congress refused to accept office unless assurances were given that the governors would not use their reserve powers under the Constitution. The viceroy supported by the Home Government was unwilling to give any such assurance. It was at this time that an article appeared in the *Statesman* with the heading, "Indian impasse deplored—Unofficial anxiety. Viceroy's silence unhelpful". The article said that the House of Commons was critical of the government's attitude to the deadlock, that the viceroy's advisers in India were unwilling to help the

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Congress extricate itself from the impasse and that considerations of prestige on both sides could not be overlooked. The article said the viceroy's prolonged silence was increasingly noticed and regarded as unhelpful. Parliamentary opinion, it said, was most impatient of this attitude and held that unless the legislatures in the Congress provinces were summoned, officialdom would incur some share of the responsibility for any further deterioration in the situation. The dispatch was purported to have come from Reuter's news agency but Reuter denied it. The viceroy found that the evidence suggested that the message was sent from the *Statesman's* London office and inspired by the editor, Arthur Moore.

Linlithgow had met Moore from time to time and he had considered him to be an impulsive Irishman but read his editorials with particular care. He thought him markedly short of ability and extremely slapdash and impetuous in his methods. The article in the *Statesman*, he told Lord Zetland, secretary of state, might have very embarrassing reactions. If it really had been sent by Moore, he said, it would justify strong pressure on the Board of Directors of the *Statesman* in London to bring him under control. Zetland confirmed to Linlithgow that Moore was indeed the author of the dispatch. He said he had met Moore before his departure for India and "found it difficult to understand his mind". Moore told Zetland that he believed that with tactful handing, Jawaharlal Nehru could be led into the cooperation fold. Zetland hoped for the support of Lord Cato, chairman of the *Statesman's* Board of Directors, in dealing with Moore.

The *Statesman* again fell foul of the viceroy when in a leading article it said that there were many in the British Government who were to be profoundly mistrusted; they would be capable of Petain's conduct in comparable circumstances and they had their British counterparts in India. "We do not speak entirely without knowledge," the editorial said. Linlithgow was wild with rage. He wrote to L.S. Amerly, secretary of state, that "this gross and damaging libel came as a climax to a long series of damaging indiscretions". He said he had little doubt that the editorial was written by Moore

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"whose removal alone could correct the situation". But Moore did not go until 1942 by which time, according to the Establishment, he had done more damage to British prestige and authority.

On August 10, 1942, Moore wrote an editorial, after the arrest and detention of Gandhi and other Congress leaders, criticising the government's action in terms which were considered by the government as "demoralising and defeatist". Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were angry and wanted that action should be taken against the paper and the writer. However, to the great relief of Linlithgow, the Board of Directors decided to relieve Moore of his post and appointed Ian Stephens to replace him. On the eve of Linlithgow's departure from India, the *Statesman*, while remembering the occasions on which it had criticised him, expressed in a generous leader its gratitude for his "courageous services" to India. Ian Stephens wrote in his memoirs that for two years after he became editor in August, 1942, "I suffered much embarrassment from his (Moore's) activities. He kept on revisiting our offices in Calcutta, Delhi or London or making speeches or issuing press statements and writing articles several of which by implication affected my shaping of the paper's policy. . . . His conduct then seemed inconsiderate."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress leader, mentions in his autobiography, that when Gandhi went on a fast unto death in Delhi in 1947, following communal disturbances, Moore who was staying in the Imperial Hotel, also began a fast. The Hindu-Muslim riots had moved him deeply. He told Azad that if the disturbances did not end he would also fast unto death. He had been in India for many years and had adopted it as his home. As an Indian he regarded it as his duty to put a stop to the human misery and degradation that were taking place. Death, he said, was preferable to "this terrible tragedy" that had overtaken India. Azad sent him a message after Gandhi broke his fast and requested that he should do the same.

Moore served as a member of the Legislative Assembly in Delhi for a term as a member of the European Group and

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his presence and frequent interjections made the proceedings lively. At one time he crossed swords with the President, Vithalbhai Patel, and was admonished. He was a fearless critic and did not spare anyone, friend or foe if he thought he was in the wrong. Although a supporter of the nationalist cause, the Congress and especially Gandhi, had been at the receiving end in many of his by-lined editorials. He was a brilliant writer and commanded a simple style which at the same time was forceful and effective. He served India and her oppressed people in his own way and made Indian journalism the richer by his contribution to its vitality and strength.

S. Sadanand

In the history of Indian journalism S. Sadanand has an important place as an able editor, an innovator and a fearless patriot. Born in Tamil Nadu, he made Bombay his headquarters for his multifarious ventures in journalism. That was where he held sway during the *Salt Satyagraha* of 1930-33 when his newspaper, *Free Press Journal*, was a rage and eclipsed all other nationalist papers. He was a pioneer of popular journalism in English, who sold his papers at six pice a copy, an unheard of thing in those days when the minimum price of a newspaper was one anna (6 paise). He created a mass base for himself by espousing popular causes and airing public grievances in a big, spectacular way which caught the imagination of the educated masses. He, more than any other journalist, strove to instil pride and devotion among the people for their country and for the epic battle for freedom waged by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi. He was a powerful, wholehearted supporter of the Congress movement and the *Free Press Journal* paid the penalty for it when the alien government persecuted it by demanding securities and forfeiting them and demanding fresh deposits. Sadanand did not flinch and survived the ordeal even after paying Rs 70,000 in one year alone. He revolutionised editorial writing. Instead of the long and meandering editorials, very often going above the head of the ordinary reader, which were a feature of the nationalist newspapers then, Sadanand introduced the sharp,

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telling and pungent editorial paragraphs which, with their mythical or *Puranic* allusions and anecdotes, went straight to the heart of the readers and enabled him to grasp with ease what was being conveyed to him. The reader became emotionally involved in whatever was suggested and his cooperation was assured. And that was how the Congress gained its supremacy in Bombay. His righthand man on the *F.P.J.* was "Stalin" Srinivasan who was an able and experienced journalist. The sobriquet, "Stalin", was given to him by his colleagues in the profession because of his moustache which closely resembled that of the Russian dictator.

Sadanand started his career as a journalist in Burma in the 1920s when it was part of India. He worked on the staff of a Rangoon newspaper and later came to India. He purchased the *Indian Express* from Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu in 1932 who had started it a year earlier. Sadanand ran it for some months and soon got tired of it for all his concentration was on the *E.P.J.* in Bombay. He went to C. Rajagopalachari in April, 1932, and urged him to take over the *Indian Express*. Rajaji told him that the man who could help him was K. Santhanam, who had just been released from prison where he had undergone imprisonment as a *Satyagrahi*. Santhanam had lost his wife while in prison and had declined the offer of the authorities to release him. When he came out of prison he had decided to renounce politics but fate willed it otherwise. Rajaji advised him to take over the *Indian Express* as its editor. For Santhanam, Rajaji's words were a command and he started a new life as a journalist. For him editing and running the *Indian Express* was a national service and a mission. The *Indian Express* became a morning paper and spokesman for the Congress. It was sold at half an anna in line with Sadanand's innovative seal. Very soon a sister Tamil daily was added and the *Dinamani* in a short time outstripped its rivals. The *Indian Express*, however, fell into a financial crisis and it finally passed into the hands of Ramnath Goenka who later became a newspaper baron and the owner of the largest chain of newspapers.

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Sadanand was a man of great ambition. He wanted to

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start a paper in every province of India. As a nationalist he felt that was the only way to promote the integration of the country. In 1932, he started an evening newspaper, *Free Press Bulletin*, in Bombay and Gujarati daily, *Nav Bharat*. As we have seen, he bought the *Indian Express* in Madras in 1932, and started the Tamil daily, *Dinamani*, in 1934. He also started a Marathi daily in Bombay, *Navasakti*. *Free India*, an English daily which he began in Calcutta, had a very short life. In anticipation of establishing newspapers in other major cities, he purchased machinery and appointed editors but unfortunately he was not successful in his efforts. According to a close associate of his, hundreds of linotype machines which he had bought for the proposed newspapers lay idle in the godowns. "He was too ambitious", one of his friends said, "and he aimed at too much."

Sadanand's notable failure was the Free Press News Agency which he formed in 1927 as a rival to the Associated Press of India (A.P.I.) which was a subsidiary of Reuter's Agency and enjoyed the patronage of the Government of India. Sadanand's objective was to survey news from a nationalist angle and to cover areas neglected by the semi-official news agency and also to provide Indian commercial news. He also had an ambition of appointing correspondents abroad to supply international news of interest to nationalist opinion in India. He was backed by big industrialists like Sir P. Thakurdas, G.D. Birla, Walchand Hirachand and M.R. Jayakar. But the nationalist news agency failed to evoke the sympathy and support of the Indian-owned press from the beginning and this was a great disappointment to Sadanand. For over three years he made brave efforts to stabilise the news agency but the reluctance of the established Indian newspapers to subscribe to its service and the sustained pressure of the rival and more influential news agency to kill it proved too overwhelming and the Free Press News Agency steadily lost ground. Also, Sadanand had to fight against official censorship both at the distribution and receiving ends. The agency's speciality was supply of news about *Satyagraha*, of police firings and beatings of volunteers and these could not be carried by the newspapers as they were

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afraid of retaliatory action by the Government. Pressure from the Government forced the resignation of four directors of the agency in 1929 and the fifth in 1931. The government came down heavily on newspapers which published news from the agency and the Press Ordinance of 1930 signed its death warrant. Most of its clients shied away. It was stated that the A.P.I. also applied pressure by insisting that its services would not be available to newspapers which subscribed to a rival news agency. Adding to Sadanand's troubles, his financiers withdrew support and the most grievous blow was his failure to win the support of influential Congress leaders. Sadanand's dream was to establish a world news agency. He had a talented correspondent in London who collected the important dispatches of foreign news agencies, selected the choicest among them and they were cabled to India and often Reuter was left standing. But the agency's scoops were of no avail. The Free Press News Agency died in 1935, unsung and unwept.

Sadanand was a builder of newspapers. His forte was management and improvisation. He was a competent news getter but it was always difficult for him to resist the temptation to transform news into brash publicity and propaganda. His news agency suffered from this foible of his and lacked credibility. One of his admirers called him "a man with a giant's energy." He had the capacity to get more out of man and machine than most others. He could produce a newspaper single-handed. It was nothing for him to sit before a linotype machine and compose copy or to sit at a news desk and edit telegrams. Once when there was stoppage of news supply owing to arrears of payment, he made up the pages with news he had written in his own hand. He could write a dispatch as lobby correspondent sitting in his chair in Madras about what took place in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi. He was a workaholic with a restless mind. He did not have patience with lazy people. He commanded the absolute loyalty of his workers. And when creditors pressed him for payment he would tell them: "I am doing a national service. Give me credit for that." He looked upon journalism as a sacred

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calling which combined the highest ideals of nationalism and of public service. His motto and that of his papers was "Free and Fearless." In the words of a writer: "He had a rugged individuality, an embarrassing independence and a fierce possessiveness. He made lasting friends in the profession but his colleagues were overwhelmed by his exacting demands and his haunting suspicions. He combined a strange predilection for adventures on the side with an almost fanatical dedication to journalism."

A colleague who worked with Sadanand in the *F.P.J.* has written: "The honours of the freedom fight of 1930-33 went equally to Sadanand and the *F.P.J.* on the press front. The paper was waging an epic fight against the Government. In fact, it was the head and front of the journalistic onslaught. Sadanand was in high mettle and in more affluence too then. The *F.P.J.* was the dauntless bark he sailed and he was the pilot who weathered a myriad of storms. The bark was often near going down but he somehow held it on course. He has left behind him a legendary fragrant reputation for a gallant courage and enterprise, and undying tradition of editorial audacity and several institutions firmly established and exceedingly useful to the country. He started life with a broken typewriter and died in a blaze of glory."

K. Rama Rao who joined the *F.P.J.* in 1932 wrote: "The combination of two mercurial minds and two devil-may-care spirits like us lasted long enough to cause surprise in friendly as well as in unfriendly quarters. We all appreciated Sadanand's superb courage, his capacity to plan like a genius and to execute like a giant. Made of tempered steel, he did not have an atom of fear in him. He was courageous to the point of being reckless, resourceful to the point of being inventive and original to the point of being unpredictable. Security after security was forfeited for defiance of law, blow after blow fell, but he did not bat an eyelid; he did not budge an inch from the firing line. With head bloody but unbowed, he went on attacking. No risk was too big, no adventure too reckless. He revelled in crises, some self-created. A soldier in every inch of him, now he fought and won; now he fought and lost; but he

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never ran away from danger or difficulty. His faith in his stars was unassailable."

Sadanand, who passed away in 1933, was a fighting editor, a great organiser, a powerful writer and a gentleman of extraordinary calibre.

Frank Moraes

The story is told that when Frank Moraes was a student at Bombay's St. Xavier's College in the 1920s, he was bored by the droning voice of a lecturer. As he slowly started sliding on his bench towards the door, the lecturer noticed it and shouted: "Moraes, what does that slow movement to the right indicate ?" "Departure, Sir," said the nonchalant Moraes as he left his seat and made for the exit. True or not, it exemplifies Moraes' spirit of independence and his ready wit and humour. He was a journalist who did not suffer fools gladly and called a spade a spade. Long training and apprenticeship in a British-owned and edited newspaper had given him a discipline and keen sense of what was right and what was wrong, and integrity and clear thinking, so that when he came to assume positions of responsibility in a newspaper he commanded great respect and authority.

He asked himself once: "What did England give me ?" and provided the answer: "Primarily, I think, a sense of tolerance combined with a habit of evaluation which while enabling one to listen to the other man's point of view did not necessarily imply that one necessarily accepted it. I suppose this attitude of mind really adds up to democracy. England also taught me to recognise the importance of standards in human relationship and individual conduct which in a way spells civilisation. I think the most valuable gift England gave me was a sense of proportion." It is this sense of proportion which marked his editorship of the *Times of India* and later of the *Indian Express*. He occupied the editorial chair of India's two leading newspapers at a time when the country was facing enormous problems of reconstruction and survival. He was a constructive critic whose writings were valued in the highest quarters of Government and paid the greatest attention. A

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close associate described him as "one of the most straightforward journalists and a gentleman." He was of a reserved nature and a man of few words. He had the advantage of moving with the leaders of government on an equal footing which developed intimacy and trust and he established high level contacts in all spheres of public life. His close friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi was a great asset. His involvement with, and appreciation of, Nehru were such that he became his biographer.

Son of an Indian government servant, Moraes was born in Bombay in 1907. He graduated from St. Xavier's College, Bombay, and later took a degree from Oxford. He was also a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and practised law for some time before he entered journalism in 1934. He worked first on the *Times of India* as a junior assistant editor. Of this period Moraes writes: "The *Times of India* then on the eve of its centenary was a British newspaper whose senior editorial and production staff were exclusively British and I was at the time the only Indian assistant editor. The editor, Sir Francis Low, was a competent Scotsman who had worked his way up through various departments of the paper. Outwardly he appeared to be reticent and diffident but he was not easily overawed or taken in."

The *Times of India* then was a firm supporter of the government since it was British-owned. "Its political policy, though more liberal than that of the Raj, moved broadly in step with it," Moraes wrote. "Its antennae were sensitive to New Delhi but less sensitive to London which failing led it occasionally to trip on British foreign policy, most noticeably as the war drew nearer. It approved the Italian invasion of Ethiopia only to make a quick about turn when Whitehall's reaction came over the wires. Its thinking was perhaps too overcast by the colonial smog." Moraes said the system suffered "from a few imperial hangovers". He was, for instance, not invited to use the senior staff canteen which was exclusively British. "Nor was I profferred a key to their exclusive lavatory." He was also excluded from the daily morning conference which the other assistant editors, all British, attended. In accordance

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with government office routine and the practice of European commercial establishments, the senior staff worked by the clock and only very rarely round it. Our daily office hours were from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. with an hour and a half for lunch and in my 19 years on the *Times of India* I do not believe I came more than a dozen times to the office at night."

It was common in those days to think that every Indian who worked on the staff of a British-owned newspaper was anti-nationalist. "For an Indian to work as a senior member of the staff of any one of these (British-owned) newspapers was to be tarred with a semi-official brush," Moraes said. "Yet like most Indian officials who were part of the British bureaucratic machine, the majority of Indian journalists even on British newspapers were nationalistic in outlook. From my own experience, there is no denying that this conflict produced something of a split personality." Writing about the Indian press under British rule, Moraes said: "The Indian press could not be described as a free press in British days for though British-owned papers like the *Statesman* and *Times of India* rarely drew official frowns and a certain latitude of expression was permitted even to Indian-owned newspapers, the Raj could, and did, descend heavily on the latter."

Moraes was not anti-British. He was conscious of the benefits of British rule. "Fairness compels the admission," he once wrote, "that whatever Britain's sins of commission and omission might have been in India, the credit side of the ledger overweighs the debt. Britain opened for India new windows on the West. In a sense she helped India also to rediscover herself for until the researches of European scholars little or nothing was known of the pre-Islamic period nor of Hindu culture and civilisation. The British association made Indians familiar with the marvels of Western science and technology and with concepts like democracy and Parliamentary Government."

Moraes went out as a war correspondent to Burma in 1943 and his dispatches were prominently displayed in the *Times of India*. They were exhaustive and Moraes was able to meet all the top brass and wrote with authority and precision on allied

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strategy and of the victories and defeats. He particularly dwelt on the heroism of the Indian troops and their commanders. Moraes later went to China to cover the war on that front. After the war he took over as editor of the *Times of Ceylon* in 1946 and remained in that post for two years. The *Times of India* changed hands at the end of the war and its new owner was Ramakrishna Dalmia. Moraes was appointed editor of the *Times of India* in 1950. It was the high watermark of his career and during the seven years he adorned the editorial chair he brought it much prestige and influence. His term as editor was marked by a brush with Bombay's Chief Minister, Morarji Desai, and he was hauled before the State Legislative Assembly on a charge of contempt of the legislature.

An editorial comment on certain proceedings in the Assembly during question hour had provoked Chief Minister Morarji Desai. The question and answer which led to the comment related to prohibition and involved issue of permits to judges. In his editorial Moraes pointed out the impropriety of the Assembly questioning the conduct of the chief justice of a High Court or the chief justice of the Supreme Court or his colleagues which could be done only by Parliament. The Assembly appointed a committee to decide if Moraes had committed contempt of the Legislature. The chairman of the committee after some hearings advised him to apologise, which he refused. He was then arraigned before the House. Moraes read out a statement justifying his comment. The Assembly decided to withdraw the press cards of the paper's Parliamentary correspondent. Moraes thereupon issued instructions that the *Times of India* should use only the slender agency reports of the proceedings of the Assembly. "In less than three months", Moraes wrote, "an emissary approached me with a plea to forget. I forgot. So did the State Assembly. The press cards of our Parliamentary correspondent were returned." On another occasion, Morarji Desai, angry over an editorial of Moraes, withdrew all government advertisements to the *Times of India*. "Had we been a small provincial journal, his action could have brought us to our knees," Moraes

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said, "but we were sufficiently affluent to continue defying him and his policies. In time the advertisements were restored."

Moraes became the editor-in-chief of the *Indian Express* in 1957. He scored many triumphs and his editorials carried great weight and influence both with government and the people. At times of national bereavement or disaster or when problems of great magnitude confronted the nation, Moraes wrote his editorial on the front page to focus attention and to convey the importance and seriousness of what was being written. He was a fearless critic of the government regardless of the personalities involved and his criticism was unbiased and free from taint of vindictiveness. He was a responsible journalist who weighed his words and did not criticise for the sake of criticism. He was an intellectual who was also author of many books, including an autobiography and a biography of his favourite Indian leader, Jawaharlal Nehru. Moraes believed in a free press as an essential corollary of a vibrant democracy. "In a colonial country", he said, "there can be no independent press but in an independent country dedicated to socialism and democracy a free press is a natural concomitant." He said Jawaharlal Nehru, always "conscious of democracy in democratic socialism scrupulously respected the freedom of the press; . . . . So did his successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri."

Moraes thought that the political columnist or commentator had still to come into his own in India "where the newspaper reader more often than not takes opinions from the editorials which are perhaps more widely read and discussed in our country than in any other land. It does not follow from this that the average Indian reader's opinions are automatically moulded by his newspaper for most educated or even literate Indians tend to have definite political views even if these are sharper and more defined at local or state levels than at the national level."

K. Rama Rao

C.P. Scott, the great editor of the *Manchester Guardian*,

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said this of journalism: "What a work it is! How multifarious, how responsive to every need and incident of life! What illimitable possibilities of achievement and excellence!" Kotamaraju Rama Rao, a giant among Indian journalists, drank deep the nectar of journalism, jumping from one flower to another, never satiated, ever humming and searching for more drops of honey. His was a restless spirit which sought adventure and excitement and did not mind the cost. He was in revolt not only against the British rulers but also against the system which they perpetuated, the injustice and exploitation and sycophancy which they generated. He was a fierce patriot who used his pen like a sword and he made no bones about it. His words were meant to kill, to destroy the opponent if words could do so. He did not believe in soft language, in expostulations and arguments, in legalistic terminology and quibbling. Not for him what was said of another great editor, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, the quality of moderation and use of sober language which marked his editorials. Mild language, however, direct or uncompromising in import, was with him a betrayal of timidity. He was blunt and outspoken and he used his pen with vitriolic effect. He was not happy with the proprietors whom he served for he kept them in perpetual fear of penal action against the paper. He moved from one paper to another, almost all of them espousing the national cause but his ebullient aggressive spirit could not be contained and the proprietors who believed in the stability and safety of the newspapers, although appreciating his patriotic fervour, were chary of entrusting him with the fortunes of their papers. He worked on the staff of more than 25 papers (including two weeklies) and was sent away in three places. It was said that Rama Rao, who hailed from Andhra Pradesh, always worked with a resignation letter in his pocket.

Rama Rao had his early training as a reporter under T.L. Vasvani of *New Times*, Hyderabad (Sind) like his brother, K. Punniah, who as editor of the *Sind Observer*, did much to promote the nationalist cause. Rama Rao later came to Bombay and joined the staff of the *Times of India*. After some years he left that paper to seek new pastures. When the editor

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asked him the reason for his resignation he said: "I have been long enough here and have learnt my work pretty well. I have my own ambitions. Can I ever be the editor of the *Times of India*?"

Then began Rama Rao's adventurous journey in journalism. He joined, as we have seen, Sadanand in the *Free Press Journal* during the crucial years of 1932-34 when the paper was a frequent victim of the rulers' persecution and fury, then moved on to T. Prakasam's *Swarajya* in Madras where he spent 100 days struggling to inject vigour and stamina into a paper which was dying for lack of resources. He was with the *National Call* in 1934 and with the *Hindustan Times* for a brief period of six months in 1938. He became the editor of the *National Herald*, Lucknow, the same year and spent there the longest period he had served any newspaper. The founder of the paper, Jawaharlal Nehru, liked him although he was not always in agreement with his writings and language and style. The two, one a great national leader and considered as a leftist by the alien rulers and the other a firebrand who believed in fire and brimstone in the attack on colonialism in the press, easily established a rapport and friendship which was to transcend the boundaries of journalism.

Rama Rao was a crusading editor. Day after day he wrote with passion and zeal and his writings played a great part in rousing the masses to follow the leadership of Gandhi in the freedom struggle. The *National Herald* under him became a symbol of the nation's fight against tyranny and exploitation and against repression and denial of human rights. It was in the vanguard of the freedom struggle and became a propaganda forum for the leaders of the movement. Rama Rao was defiant and fearless of authority and he slashed the opponents of freedom, be it British officialdom or the sycophantic moderates who flourished under the favours bestowed on them by the alien regime, with his pen which he used like a sword. He exposed abuse of power, and police brutality in language which made the blood boil in Indian hearts as it made the rulers sit up and vow vengeance. The officials involved him in a defamation case when he was in jail of a prison where *Swarajya*

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prisoners were kept sued him for libel for an editorial on the treatment of political prisoners. Rama Rao was convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The *Herald* stopped editorials from 1940 as a protest against the pre-censorship and other restrictions on the press. In August, 1942, Rama Rao saw the police raid of the office and press of the *Herald* and seizure of machinery which resulted in the closure of the paper. Rama Rao returned to his desk after the paper was revived in 1946 but left it shortly afterwards. He was a freelancer for some time and worked at Gandhi's headquarters. He took over as editor of *Searchlight* of Patna in 1948. His services were terminated in 1950. He saw service with some other newspapers and ended up as a legislator when he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha. His end was tragic when he was killed in a train accident in Uttar Pradesh.

Gandhi called him a "fighting editor". Nehru described him as "an outstanding figure in Indian journalism". For C. Rajagopalachari, he was a "dear dreadnought". The list of newspapers with which he was associated is pretty long and besides the papers we have already mentioned it includes the *Pioneer*, *Leader*, *Bombay Chronicle*, *Indian Daily Mail*, *Advocate of India* and *India News Chronicle*.

Rama Rao said: "Journalism is the destroyer of rust, a foe of pessimism and an amplifier of the areas of life and work", was a rebel who questioned many things accepted as gospel truth. When talking about the freedom of the press, he posed the question: "Freedom for whom? Freedom for the proprietor or freedom of expression in the public interest?" He said: "While the proprietor-editor has all the power and no responsibility and who reserves to himself the right to dictate policies with an eye to his several other interests, the editor *de facto* as distinguished from the editor *de jure* has all the responsibility and no power." Rama Rao recalled that journalism of the 1930s was of a very high standard. "Discussions were kept at a high level, if only because the traditional standards of this country demanded excellence in things pertaining to the spirit and the intellect, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of kingdoms and empires and the lapses and degradations of

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social life. The newspaper was a lengthened shadow of its crusading owner-editor. Today, the Fourth Estate is, for good or evil, totally different in aim, purpose and content." He said: "From the point of effective service, moral values and social usefulness, the press in India can boast of a record as good as that of any other in the world. It has treated its work as a trust, sacred and vital. By and large, it has been loyal to the doctrine that facts are sacred but comment is free and it has been national in more senses than one."

"What was the lure of journalism in the days when I started," Rama Rao asked and answered the question: "It was the nearest route of attack on an empire which we all hated and wanted to overthrow and the best avenue of service in the cause of purposeful patriotism. We thought we could be Annie Besants or Hornimans, Tilaks or Motilal Ghoshs. It was the quickest way to fame which is certainly not the least nor the last infirmity of noble minds and is definitely an honourable ambition, an energising aspiration. I have enjoyed the thrills of the hourly chase, the sensations of the daily adventure. I have savoured the pleasures of success and suffered the pangs of defeat. The profession was a rough but challenging pathway to national service and incidentally to a good name."

Rama Rao believed that journalists should be trained and taught in schools of journalism. He said that a school of journalism could teach the beginner the essentials which could not be learnt by working in a newspaper for over five years. He himself trained many journalists who later came to occupy high positions in Indian journalism. He fought for the rights and protection of working journalists and helped in the formation of the Federation of Working Journalists in Delhi in 1950. He was a member of the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspapers Editors' Conference for many years. He waged a relentless war against monopoly control of the press.

N. Raghunathan

Not many outside the world of journalism would have heard of N. Raghunathan, the celebrated sub-editor, assistant editor

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of *The Hindu* who virtually functioned as the *de facto* editor for over 20 years. He prided in his anonymity and allowed his writings which were marked by scholarly approach and erudition to speak for him. His mastery of the language was incredible and his arguments were irrefutable. His great weapon was a capacity to marshal facts and point to the unerring conclusions which destroyed the opponent's strenuously built up case. Not for him the sword or aggressive language which attracted the spotlight and popular applause. He relied on cold logic and telling arguments helped by a prodigious memory, which was elephantine in character, which unearthed precedents and situations to demolish the points made by constitutional experts and politicians of the ruling race. He was a great constitutional foe of the colonial rulers from whom he commanded a measure of respect and also fear. The leaders of the national movement found in him a stout champion and adviser in their fight against the alien rulers on the constitutional plane. He tore to pieces and ridiculed the futile arguments of British spokesmen, from the secretary of state downwards to the viceroy and his minions, to deny India freedom and dignity. He digested white papers and reports on constitutional reforms with relish and he was unsurpassed in his analysis and exposure of their weak points and unacceptable postures. It was nothing for him to dash off three two-column editorials in one day and once when his colleagues played a prank on him, he wrote all the editorials, sometimes extending four to five columns, for a week.

His friends and admirers thought Raghunathan would have been a fairly prosperous lawyer (he had a law degree), a fairly successful teacher or even a fairly good administrator. Raghunathan said he escaped being an administrator by "malice prepense". As for lawyering or teaching "I wonder whether I could have stood the hungry backchat of the bar room or the bland superciliousness of the common room for a day. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I doubt whether I could have secured and kept any other respectable employment. By a strange quirk of fate I seem to have slid almost without knowing it into that odd shaped hole in a million which

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seemed to have been made for this oddly constructed individual. That I have stuck there bespeaks therefore, no special virtue. I could not have got out had I tried. . . . I do not know whether the millions of words I have written ever influenced a single soul. It would be a relief to know that even if they did no good they did no evil. No man is good enough to tell another what to think. Aesop's fly on the wheel might have done far more harm if he could have put a spoke in it."

Raghunathan came to *The Hindu* in 1926 from a morning newspaper, the *Daily Express*, in Madras of which he had been editor for some years. He was a discovery of V.S. Srinivasa Sastri who was a close friend of Kasturi Srinivasan. Raghunathan had rejected *The Hindu's* offer the previous year since he loved the freedom as editor, which he enjoyed. He, however, reluctantly accepted the offer when it was renewed the following year and thus began a historic and rewarding association with India's leading nationalist newspaper. He very soon established an intimate relationship with Kasturi Srinivasan and the two became inseparable associates in running the paper. They had similar views on most subjects and the points of disagreement were far too few to break their intimacy. N.R., as he was popularly known, shaped the policy of the paper with Srinivasan in total agreement and together they made *The Hindu* the most powerful and influential paper in the country. So much was his confidence and trust in N.R. that when he wanted to retire in 1948, Srinivasan, who refused to let him go, said: "A memo from me will never go to N.R.". N.R. did not retire till 1957 when Srinivasan reluctantly agreed.

N.R. was a master craftsman who sanctified everything that he handled. He was an outstanding sub-editor who could edit copy, especially *mofussil* copy (which had to be wholly rewritten) with an instinctive feel for mistakes in grammar, faulty style and expression. He wrote his editorials by hand with a sharpened pencil in bold letters which for all their hugeness in size were all the same mostly illegible and only the practised eye of the lino-type operator (what he wrote went straight to the press and was not typed) could decipher them.

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He wrote less than a dozen sentences on a sheet of paper and the matter was set up and the proof sent to him as fast as he wrote them. During the 30 years he served *The Hindu*, his dedication to the paper was total and he had no other interest in life. He spurned invitations to go abroad and isolated himself from the outside world. Although he wrote about all the big leaders and personalities of India and the world, he never came in contact with any of them nor did he want to. He was not a crusader like a Horniman or a Rama Rao. His writing lacked passion and anger and the vibrant quality which roused the feelings of all those who read it. His strong point was argument and cold logic presented in a style which was majestic and powerful in its onslaught. He was an orthodox Hindu who fully believed in the tenets and rituals of his religion and in the wisdom of his ancestors. He was opposed to Gandhi's reform movement and asked to be excused from writing on it. A notable achievement of his was the *Literary Supplement* which he edited for *The Hindu* for over 25 years. It gained national and international reputation and it had a circulation independent of *The Hindu*.

It was not only as the *de facto* editor of *The Hindu* that N.R. was famous, but also as a columnist under the pseudonym, Vigneshwara. He was permitted by Srinivasan in 1946 to contribute a column to *Swatantra* and then to *Swarajya*, a weekly, edited by Khasa Subba Rao, which was titled Sotto Voce. Explaining his role as a columnist N.R. said: "I thought that it might be rewarding to examine current ideas and developments in the light of those basic purposes and abiding values that one who cares to look behind the superficialities of modern life may discern in the age-long culture and way of life of the Indian people. As regards his pen name he said: "The adoption of a pen name was due partly to a self-imposed rule of anonymity which I observed all through my working life as a journalist and partly to a desire to prevent facile—and wrong—inferences being drawn as they might be if the writer of this column were known to be one who was closely associated with the political comment of a daily newspaper."

A staunch believer in the freedom of the press, N.R. advocated an independent press unattached to any party, ideology

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or group. "The press has a duty to expose and denounce force, fraud and chicanery by whomsoever employed. But it has no need to enter into a partnership with the state for this purpose. In fact, freedom from any commitments of any sort to anybody except its own conscience is a condition of its efficiency. To a press that knows its own mind, no man is a god, no power is infallible. It will refuse to be overawed by authority or smothered under the blanket of respectability. And it will avoid like the plague the bovine contentment of 'forty head of cattle feeding like one".

N.R. was pessimistic about the future of the honest newspaperman. "The honest newspaperman," he wrote, "becomes less and less sure with the years of the rationale of the enterprise he is engaged in. He does not know for whom he writes and in serving up the day's news he engages in a process of selection and emphasis which is as irresponsibly hazardous as divination. He is exhorted to remember that he must give his unknown and unknowable reader what he wants. And he finds it a safe rule in the circumstances to give just what the paymaster, whom he knows only too well, thinks is good for that mythical being, the average reader. The one thing that seems to be fairly clear about the great public is that its understanding of the newspapers it consumes is in inverse ratio to its enjoyment."

N.R. thought aloud more on the "mythical average reader". "Your average man is a myth", he wrote. "The writer for the press who directs his daily fussilade of advice, remonstrance or exhortation at this phantom is really shooting his bolt in the dark. He has not the time, even if he had the capacity, for that candid self-questioning by which he may hope to understand something of our common human condition. Meanwhile, the 'people' are hot on his heels, gobbling up, like the ostrich, whatever they see in print. The balance is not redressed by the handful of cynics who refuse to believe anything they see in print. The fusillades are so many, so furious and so contrary, the reader clings so desperately to his spar of private hopes and fears in a chopping sea of universal uncertainty and there is such an intermittent squall of irrelevant news blowing that

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the confused din of opinion seems to matter no more than the crackling of thorns. In the multitude of counsel there is an alibi for the muddled reader. But a newspaperless world is not necessarily a better world."

Noticing a lowering of standards in journalism, N.R. warned: "It was said of C.P. Scott that he made righteousness readable. The ambition may strike many of our smart newspapermen as amusingly old fashioned. But while by giving the public plenty of crime stories, spicy gossip and sports chatter, the journalistic cheap Jack may reap rich dividends, he is already steadily undermining in the safety of the realm. For he debases standards and renders the doped public incapable of rational judgment. No Government which works for the emergence of an instructed democracy can afford to look on unconcerned. If it actually helps in the demoralisation, though doubtless without intending it, where shall we look for succour ? The influence of a newspaper is ultimately a matter of character. The personality that an established newspaper has built up over long years is, like the coral reef, the work of innumerable hands. It is subdued to a design implicit in the social situation. The reader moulds his paper at least as much as the paper colours his thoughts. Such a paper evolves a style of its own, a way of doing things, which is the right way for it. Bungling interference by authority which might have the effect of forcing its individuality into a strait-jacket would be a public misfortune."

N.R. was not happy with the radical policies of free India's government. "In their anxiety to make up for lost time, they shut their eyes to the realities of our national life. They resolved that radical changes involving wholesale adoption of the goals that the West had set itself as well as methods it had forged must be forced through. What they failed to see was that large-scale industrialisation and modern technology, though they had powerfully aided, were not solely or even primarily responsible for the Western nations having in varying degree opted for a secularist society and a planned socialism. These had evolved from certain specific and distinctive qualities

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of the European mind. The character, temperament and outlook of the Indian people have been moulded by a different spiritual tradition. Gandhiji saw this clearly enough but not his successors who thought that on the old stock a new and in many ways alien tradition could be successfully grafted."

The born leader writer that he was N.R. noted with regret that the leading articles were on the way out in many countries. "The leading article was pronounced dead ages ago," he wrote, "and one or two papers have shown the world that they have the courage of conviction by actually dropping it. But others seem to be in no hurry to follow. On their broad pages, the fount of home-brewed wisdom has thinned to a trickle perhaps but has not dried up altogether. And in the place of one anonymous leader writer, there has sprung up a whole host of columnists and specialists whose names are household words in four continents."

In a tribute to N.R. as a columnist, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, the educationist, said: "The purveyor of serious political comment in a daily paper of national vogue became the miscellaneous columnist of an individualist weekly paper and the columnist presently revealed himself as the perfect humanist and the flawless literary craftsman. A lifetime of training in the exacting discipline of expression in a difficult foreign language now yielded results. Week after week the essay appeared—with somewhat quiet assurance and look of effortless ease—and as the weeks gathered into months and years, the *Sotto Voce* feature became almost the sole standard bearer of traditional values and robust sanity in world of rattle and glare and slogans and screams. Raghunathan's is often the conservative, unpopular, diehard views; his assent in the tradition is apt to assume the tone of dissent with current notions of propriety and progress; and yet his views cannot be dismissed as of no consequence for these undertones of assent and dissent come with an accent of authority that compels attention if not acquiescence."

N.R. passed away in 1982 at a ripe old age, but for him there was no retirement. He produced two monumental works, translations of the *Bhagavatham* and the *Ramayana*, besides

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minor literary works in the closing years of his life. They were masterpieces and perfect examples of his scholarship and mastery of both English and Sanskrit. He was the inimitable journalist to the last.

M. Chalapati Rau

Among India's great editors M. Chalapati Rau stands out as the champion of the working journalist for whom he strove to secure basic rights as a worker and a decent wage, and as the uncompromising fighter for a free and independent press. He fought against pressures on the newspaper internally from the owner or externally from vested interests. He had a sharp wit and a keen sense of the absurd and ridiculous and used his powerful pen to deflate the egos of power crazy politicians and bureaucrats. The high point in his career was the close rapport he established with Jawaharlal Nehru and the vigour and clarity with which he expounded his ideals and philosophy. It was a "concordat of minds". It was a very special relationship between the man who founded the *National Herald* and the man who edited it during its great years.

Chalapati Rau or M.C. as he was known among his friends, joined the *National Herald* in 1938 as number 13 in the staff. Within two years he became number two. It was a phenomenal rise due to sheer merit. When the paper closed down in 1942, he spent some time working in the *Hindustan Times* and re-joined the *Herald* when it was revived in 1945. He was appointed editor in 1946 and held that post for 30 years which must be quite a record. His command of the language was the envy of his colleagues in the profession and according to one of them there were not then a dozen in India who had that mastery. In the words of one admirer: "He wrote in a heavy, granite-like style untouched by poetic feeling and imagery. He wrote with vigour and precision when putting forth his view or rebutting an opposite one. He could be delightfully allusive drawing liberally from the wells of literature and history. He owed this to wide and purposeful reading all through his life. He did occasionally dip his pen in vitriol to make sleeping

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statements and pass forth harsh judgments." He once wrote of Indian writers in English: "The Indo-Anglian writer is typical of our intellectual wastefulness."

"Our Fleet Street is a street of ink", Chalapati Rau wrote, "a street of adventure but also a street of perils. Indian journalism has been one of many vigorous forms of the expressiveness of Indian nationalism. To Kristodas Pal, Motilal Ghosh, Subramania Aiyer, and Chintamani, Fleet Street was not their spiritual home, though the last one absorbed most of the traditions without being burdened by techniques. They were great journalists. They built up traditions which have made journalism what it is today or what it was till yesterday. Our society is still amorphous, weighed down by the millstone of an English-educated middle class and it seems difficult for journalism to recover its sociological functions. For one sad feature of our journalism is the lack of social vision which includes political vision."

"The editors of those days," according to one writer, "drawn from the learned professions, combined a fine public acumen, a flexibility of outlook that was well above the reproach of opportunism, a determination to keep the flag flying in the face of repression and press laws and find the best way of doing well by themselves as much as by the country. There can be no questioning the quality of service they rendered to the county, their skill in that kind of tight-rope walking or skating on thin ice which was required to escape the attention of the new minister and at the same time adhere to the standards of courageous support of the national cause." Chalapati Rau must have had these editors in mind when he wrote about the Indian Fleet Street.

M.C. was an expert in foreign politics. "His knowledge of foreign politics would suffice half a dozen chancelleries," says an admirer. His Sunday articles reviewing the progress of World War II were acclaimed as outstanding. He had that "inestimable virtue of a diplomat—he can be as silent and as enigmatic as the sphinx. Tickle him, he will not laugh; prick him, he will not bleed. His reserves are more intriguing than his revelations. He does not believe in going out to meet humanity at large;

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he is like a famous editor who said that humanity might as well meet him by appointment. He has a soft and warm heart which he hides effectively behind an austere and aloof pose." He spent almost his entire career as a journalist in one newspaper, the *National Herald*, which although it did not have a big circulation, was a powerful voice of the national movement, the voice of its most enlightened section, under the stewardship of Chalapati Rau. His dedication to the paper was overwhelming. Of the *National Herald's* contribution, he said: "In the process of Constitution-making, the integration of the country, in free India's contribution to the fight for freedom in other parts of the world, in the shaping of India's plans and the ceaseless task of nation building, in the political, social and economic integration of the people – the *National Herald* has written stout-heartedly and freely as a critic and as a friend with the ideals of service for which it was started kept constantly in view. The *National Herald* wrote without fear but without malice."

The philosophy which guided him and to which he was deeply committed was the philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru. "M.C. was the best and the most lucid exponent of Nehruism apart from Nehru himself," says a writer. "At the same time it was the freedom that Nehru always insisted that a journalist should be assured that enabled Chalapti Rau to rise to great heights as a distinguished editor whose views commanded wide respect. The relationship between the two stands out indeed as a model of how a political leader and a journalist of integrity should interact in a democracy where the masses have to be informed so that they are equipped adequately to elect those who are to wield power. Not only did Chalapati Rau understand the significance of this relationship but this understanding became the basis of his monumental endeavour to popularise Jawaharlal Nehru as the architect of Indian democracy." Indira Gandhi once described Chalapati Rau "as the conscience keeper of my father." It was said of him that reading his editorials in those days one felt that virtually every word in them had been tested and weighed against the quality of understanding and judgement that informed Jawaharlal Nehru's own

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approach to men and matters and policies. In the words of an admirer: "His finest hour, there is little doubt, coincided and was coterminous with Jawaharlal Nehru's stewardship of Indian affairs. He belonged to and represented what was the best in the Nehru phase of Indian journalism. He survived . . . to see another age begin . . . but he was not of it and it was hard at times altogether to avoid the impression that he was ill at ease in it and even seemed something of a forlorn, if distinguished alien in it."

Chalapati Rau had the remarkable capacity to absorb all that was happening around him and to react and convey his impressions of what they signified. There was no major event in his life-time on which he had not made weighty comments in his editorials. To the last he was uncompromising in his integrity and in his principles. An admirer wrote: "Himself living a life of an ascetic, he commanded a moral stature which acted as a living indictment of all those in the press who would for personal gains, make peace with inequity and injustice. He never forgave those in the journalist profession who would sacrifice their integrity for a comfortable life-style. Chalapati Rau could never suffer cant and hypocrisy in the community of pressmen as he stood for a cleaner public life."

He believed in a free press and for him it did not mean merely a press free from legal restrictions. The press must be free from both internal and external pressures, he said. "An independent press is not merely a press independent of the Government but independent of vested interests," he declared. "Internal pressures arise within the newspaper from the owner or from the manager on behalf of the owner. Editorial freedom and independence means not only the editor's freedom and independence but the freedom and independence which the editor's staff share with him. . . . Internal pressures are multiplied by the growth of what are known as chains, groups and multiple units. . . . There are pressures from advertisers also."

Working journalists will remember Chalapati Rau for the dedication with which he worked to gain them recognition and a decent wage. As a member of the first Press Commission he was greatly instrumental in focusing attention on the conditions of the working journalists and to suggest measures to

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bring cheer and hope into their lives. "He was no ivory tower editor," says a writer, "nor a fat salaried scribe insensitive to the lot of others in his profession. He was undoubtedly the builder of the working journalists' movement in the country. Under his constant care and guidance, this movement has grown into a pivotal organisation in the world of the Indian press. Chalapati Rau looked upon the working journalists' movement not merely as a platform to protect the working conditions of the Indian journalists but as an organ to defend the freedom of the Indian press from pollution by proprietorial and other vested interests as also from executive pressures and blandishments." He founded the Federation of Working Journalists in 1950 and was its president for three terms. He commanded the respect and affection of his colleagues and peers in the profession. "Journalism is not a matter of wages and benefits, " he said, "It is a matter of craft and craftsmanship and journalists are expected to possess not only professional skill but professional pride. It is a free and equal profession. The competition is open. Anyone can rise by enterprise. There is a sense of fellowship between the editor and machine man, between the sub-editor and the proof-reader. The newspaper is one entity. Every member of the staff should stand or fall by it.

Chalapati Rau passed away in 1983. He was apparently killed in a road accident and his body was found on the roadside. In a tribute to him, one of his admirers wrote: "Chalapati Rau as a personality of outstanding calibre stood out in the national life of India. Behind this massive figure was a person of shy and gentle nature. With his abundance of wit and irrepressible humour, was not attracted by the glamour of social life; by temperament he was lonely—almost a lone wolf. But he was by no means unapproachable. Particularly to those younger to him, he had always something to impart out of his vast erudition and professional experience. He was a teacher *par excellence*—but only to those who could break through the outer crust of his strange aloofness. Even when he was irritated he bore no rancour. And he left this world as unobstrusively as he lived. All those who knew him could sense that a giant had departed, the like of whom is not to be found in the intellectual world of the India of today."

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WHITHER INDIAN JOURNALISM?

The Indian press today is in the throes of a revolution. A revolution not in content or thinking but a revolution in production technique and commercialisation. A whole new genre has been added to it with the magazine explosion which began after 1976. The Emergency declared in 1975 was a turning point in the history of Indian journalism. It saw the emergence of the news magazine in a big way and of the investigative reporter. According to one writer: "The last decade undoubtedly had cut a swath of excitement and vitality through the quagmire of staid punditry in which Indian journalism had bogged down. With the end of the Emergency, the Indian press came back on a rebound perhaps unmatched anywhere else in the world. It was as if Prometheus had been unchained. A revolution was under way not only of style and substance but also in variety, management, circulation, technology, professionalism, marketing and design."

Arun Shourie, described as the father of Indian investigative reporting, noted: "The Emergency affected the politicisation of the Indian middle class with the result that they wanted to know more and more about the people ruling them." And in the words of another noted journalist: "The job these readers and consumers wanted the new breed of eagerly responding reporters and editors to do for them was to take the cobwebs out of reporting."

The Emergency left in its wake a plethora of scandal, gossip and unpleasant stories which were like manna from heaven to the news-hungry magazines which exploited them to their best advantage and circulations soared to unheard of heights bringing in more and more magazines which flooded the market. The Press which have managed to forge ahead

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and establish themselves with unprecedented circulations are *India Today* and *Sunday*. *India Today*, a fortnightly, first came out in late 1975. It was intended to be a news magazine for Indians living abroad. Madhu Trehan, its founder editor, was an Indian resident abroad with a journalism diploma from an American university. Seeing that the first issue had evoked a good response from the domestic market it was decided to cater to Indian readers and Arun Purie, brother of Madhu Trehan, took over as editor. An accountant by training, Arun Purie proved an able editor and he put *India Today* firmly on its feet. According to one writer : "With skilful editing and slick production, *India Today* captured two kinds of readers : one, the existing newspaper reader who wanted access to well-written stories ; second, the kind of reader who did not read the newspapers too carefully and wanted the news delivered to him once a fortnight in a glossy, easy to digest package."

Sunday, a weekly, from the *Anand Bazar Patrika* group, was launched in 1970 under the editorship of M.J. Akbar and it was an instant success. The same group started the English daily, *Telegraph*, in Calcutta in 1902 with Akbar as editor. The *Week*, published by the *Malayalam Manorma* group from Kottayam and *Frontline*, a fortnightly from the publishers of *The Hindu*, were other news magazines which have made good. Also making a determined bid to capture the front rank was the *Illustrated Weekly of India* of the *Times of India* group which under its energetic and enterprising editor, Pritish Nandy, had a face-lift with interesting articles and features. The investigative scoop, the personality profiles, the arresting photo feature and the no-hold-barred interviews, not to mention the scandals and gossip of the film world which the news magazines provided in profusion, were lapped up by a sensation-starved readership. There was a dramatic jump in circulation of periodicals and newspapers. In 1975, there were 225 publications—newspapers and magazines—with a combined circulation of just over 14 million. In 1985, there were 300 publications with a combined circulation of more than 26 million.

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The journalist who made the greatest impact on his readers was Arun Shourie, who first wrote for *India Today* and later became executive editor of the *Indian Express* which published his investigative stories day after day, and week after week. He exposed Emergency excesses and abuse of authority and his particular target was Indira Gandhi. He successfully uncovered the misuse of official position by a chief minister to collect funds and his story created a storm in Parliament and in the country, and finally resulted in the ouster of the chief minister and in his prosecution. An admirer has said : "Shourie had an impact on Indian journalism that few will be able to equal. Firstly, he proved the power of newspapers. If you have a story on the front page of every one of your editions when Parliament is in session, then the government has to take notice. Secondly, he showed journalists how to push themselves, how always to investigate further and to document everything. And thirdly, he was the first Indian journalist to become a nationally respected figure and thereby altered the entire perception of journalism as a profession." Another journalist described Shourie as a man of "phenomenal intelligence, passionate intolerance of injustice and unerring grasp of how best to break a story."

The Arun Shourie exposé stories set off a chain of other investigative stories, some of them gruesome and revolting. The *Indian Express* took the credit for most of these. One of the reporters, Ashwin Sarin, heard that women were being bought and sold like cattle in Madhya Pradesh and he pursued the story in spite of government denials. He went out to that state and disguising himself 'bought' a woman and brought her to Delhi, proving that women were being sold in Madhya Pradesh. The same reporter got himself arrested on a drunken charge and went to Tihar Jail of Delhi to expose the abominable conditions there. Another reporter, Arun Sinha, created a sensation when he reported the blinding of undertrial prisoners by the police in Bihar. In Bombay, Sheela Barse, a free-lance journalist, who wrote a series of articles on child prostitution followed it by moving the court to release children languishing in a remand home. Praful Bidwai of the *Times of*

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India in a series of articles exposed the inefficient administration of the nuclear establishment.

An observer of the scene today writes : "Editors in the new magazines get five-figure incomes and even the sub-editors of yesteryear now begin jobs in progressive organisations with four-figure packets. With so much money beckoning, several senior journalists have quit cradle-to-grave secure positions to strike out on their own as syndicated columnists. And they are getting rich quick." According to one writer : "Whereas earlier journalists had been underpaid hacks, eager for subsidised accommodation and government handouts, the new type of journalist was irreverent, iconoclastic and had a healthy contempt for politicians."

In the first flush of success, the news magazines went all out to provide a diet of sensationalism and in the words of a writer they specialised in "stripping bodies and reputations". As one observer wrote : "News had the same meaning in the developing countries as in the West—placing a premium on the sensational violence, crime, wars, dacoity and dirty politics. The trend was in giving more importance to what was wrong than what was right, to conflicts rather than to resolving them." This observer noted that the stories published by the magazines "had no relation to the typical lives of rural people or people in general. The result of this was that at times reportable incidents were crowded out by stories of murders, race and communal riots, strikes, violence, *gheraos* and quarrels among public functionaries." The Second Press Commission referring to this aspect of journalism said that the objection was not to reporting these incidents, which in any case formed a part of the news flow, but to the preoccupation with them to such an extent that the readers were not supplied the information they needed to "discharge their responsibilities to society."

Many of the reports and features carried in the news magazines bordered on defamation and libel and it could be said of them what was said about American newspapers by a commentator : "Most present day newspapers knowingly print potentially libellous statements. They do so because

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otherwise they would have a dull paper. Consequently, some of the best stories in the paper would run a chance of being adjudged libellous if examined in court. But the newspaper, in its attempt to present interesting material, is willing to take the risk. It also prints potentially libellous material because many of the people libelled are not in a position to sue the paper or because the paper can often secure a small out-of-court settlement if the probable outcome appears dark. The wisdom of the newspaper's course is evidenced by the small number of cases won by the plaintiffs as compared with the abundance of material which is potentially libellous."

The news magazines are also a reflection of the state of mind of the people today. In the words of Norman Cousins : "What is happening today is that the natural reactions of the individual against violence are being blunted. The individual is being desensitised by living history. We are developing new reflexes and new responses that tend to slow down the moral imagination and relieve us of essential indignation over impersonal hurt. We are becoming casual about brutality. We have made our peace with violence."

There is a brighter side to the news magazines. Of them, M.V. Kamath, the well-known journalist wrote : "I envy them, their style, their elan, their self-assuredness—even their arrogance . . . . I admire all the new writers and commentators. There is a certain freshness about them like that of newly laundered sheets. The commentators, the critics, the reviewers and the reporters sound knowledgeable. There is so much educated writing . . . . Perhaps their sentences lack the natural ebb and flow of thought. I often notice the absence of harmony and grace in the new writing. But what they do not have in these departments they make up by the vigour of their style and the force of their argument. They are very provocative and persistent and if I may say so, irreverent." Kamath noted : "There is a sharp and happy emphasis on design and layout in the new journalism ; lay-out man and the artist are coming into their own. And another welcome development is the respect given to columnists and commentators."

What quite [illegible] the aggressive spirit of the decade

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has been confined to the news magazines and the newspapers, by and large, have been unaffected by it. While they have made considerable progress in updating techniques of production and management, there has been no appreciable change in their contents and thinking. What V.S. Naipaul wrote of the Indian press some years ago still holds good in the large majority of cases. "Indian newspapers", he said, "have a limited vision and there is an absence of enquiry, the absence of what may be called human interest. The liveliness of the Indian press is confined to the editorial pages. Elsewhere, there are mainly communiques, handouts, reports of speeches and functions. Indian journalism developed no reporting tradition ; it often reported India as a foreign country." Naipaul said : "The Indian press has interpreted its function in an Indian way. It has not sought to put India in touch with itself ; it doesn't really know how and it hasn't felt the need . . . . Away from the political inferno of its editorial pages, it saw few causes for concern . . . . With its restricted view of its functions, it matched the triviality of the politics ; it became part of the Indian anarchy. It reported speeches and more speeches ; it reduced India to its various legislative chambers. It turned into national figures those politicians who were the least predictable." Another foreign observer has noted that a feature of the Indian press was that its reporting lacked initiative. "Well-known writers,", he said, "were philosophical in outlook ; their criticisms were pitched at a high level of generality . . . . It was perhaps little wonder that faced with India's problems, India's newspapers sometimes seemed to be preaching."

"James Cameron, the veteran journalist, wrote that it was uncommonly difficult to find out what was going on anywhere if one depended on an Indian newspaper. "It had not", he wrote, "the purposeful stubborness of the communist press nor the meretricious stupidity of the pop press of the West it was just semi-literate, ill-argued, imitative ; when it was not boring it was exasperating. The newspapers occasionally professed to be combating pressures from government which was quixotic since the Indian press was running by [illegible]

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government handouts and for convoluted obfuscation Indian Government handouts have to be read to be believed or otherwise as the case may be."

Arun Shourie has remarked that a "distressingly large" number in the profession today were not even "good professionals". "Many of them", he said, "have incestuous relations with their subjects—in particular with government authorities. Many have the most cavalier attitude to facts, many are too lazy to inform themselves of the laws that impinge on their work—and the laws are just a few pages each ; so many are too lazy to examine the allegations they purvey ; they are so cynical and casual as not to have even an author's concern about whether what they write is used at all, whether it is mutilated or not, the limit of their concern being to file their 750-word dispatch. A distressingly large proportion among them spend more time on petty intrigues and back-biting than on their work."

"Modern Indian journalism", wrote another journalist, "is doubtless producing specialists, investigators, unearthing interesting potential but much of the talent is unsecurely based because of a certain disregard for precision in the use of language and rigour in reasoning. This arguably is true of far too many recent knight errants in the profession, though there are obvious and distinguished exceptions. Actually, some of the older 'new' columnists too are not free of this disability which prompts them to rush into areas of rhetoric where the more circumspect would fear to tread."

The Second Press Commission said in its report : "Many foreign observers have commented on the preoccupation of the Indian press with politics and politicians. There would be nothing wrong if it were preoccupation with politics in the large Aristotelian sense of concern with the building of a society which shall make the good life possible. The preoccupation, however, is largely with the petty politics of conflict between and within political parties and with the sayings and doings of ministers and other prominent politicians." "The commission cited the example of newspapers giving prominence to what the home minister said while inaugurating

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the World Religious Conference held in Delhi and virtually ignoring what the world religious leaders had to say about the oneness of religion. The commission was only highlighting what is a common failing of Indian newspapers. At all conferences, meetings, and seminars what the professionals or experts or people intimately connected with the topics discussed say does not count and is given minimum space while the amateurish platitudes and generalities of ministers and other dignitaries secure maximum space and headlines.

The Press Commission said : "The role that the press plays in a country is considerably influenced by the news values which prevail among journalists. If conflict is news but not the resolution of conflict, if the unusual and the bizarre is news rather than the normal, if news is what happened just a while ago (even if the event was not significant) and not a significant happening of a week or month earlier which has only now come to light, the portrayal of reality in the press is bound to be distorted." The commission found the influence of the news and pictorial values of Western newspapers even in highly reputed daily newspapers and magazines. "It arises", it observed, "from the prevalent news values among editors, news editors, sub-editors and reporters who are collectively referred to as 'gatekeepers of news' because they determine what shall be published." Pran Chopra wrote : "The journalist confronts innumerable events every hour of the day and handles innumerable messages about them. Out of the heap he picks a few by purely his own subjective judgement and he puts them on a paper of whose ultimate destination he has no idea. His audience is varied and largely unknown to him. And lately he has begun to care a little less about what his reader's preferences are and to care a little more about what he thinks they should be."

Accuracy is the most elementary thing in journalism and yet it has not been completely mastered by Indian newspapers. As one writer put it : "Its lessons may be learnt by heart one day, only to be imperfectly remembered the next. No journalist regards inaccuracy, either inadvertent or deliberate as a good thing but, nevertheless, many journalists condone

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it as a necessary evil in the attainment of speed and the maximum of news interest, trusting in a higher general average of authenticity to maintain confidence in the paper within the margin of safety."

Distortion of news is another malady of many Indian newspapers. Distortion can happen in the following ways ; (1) Highlighting of events that have no real importance by interweaving the anecdotal the irrelevant and what is considered picturesque with facts of real national significance ; (2) Making news by putting together isolated facts and presenting them as a whole or presenting partial truths in such a way that they amount to the whole truth ; (3) Misrepresentation by implication characterised by the presentation of facts in such a way that the implicit conclusions are favourable to particular interests ; (4) Distortion by "pre-conditioning" of events, specific facts being presented in such a way that unfounded or exaggerated fears and misgivings are created in order to condition later action by individuals, communities and Governments ; (5) Distortion by keeping silent on situations presumed to be no longer of interest to the public ; (6) Distortion arising from government control of news, from restrictions on the freedom of access to news sources, from censorship and from government authority infringing press freedom.

It seems necessary to broaden the concept of news specially in a developing country like ours. News must include not only "events" but entire "processes"—hunger being a process while a hunger strike is an event ; a flood being an event while a long struggle to control floods is a process. Our reporters and journalists must give greater coverage to processes and to long term ends. A new objective in the pursuit of journalism is called for. Good news should be considered just as worthy of interest as bad news. As has been remarked by a writer ; "If communication is essential so that development effort receives the support and cooperation of the people at large should not communicators not only objectively report events which constitute 'valid' news but also serve as society's analysts and educators, thus, playing a vital role in the national and international struggle to promote human progress."

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A recent study on the role of the press in the Third World stressed the importance of development journalism, a field much neglected in India. "In addition to the basic task of carrying news stories or reports, it was felt that the press in developing countries should also act as a social monitor, a constructive critic, the stimulator of debates on public issues, a medium of feedback, a watchdog of democracy, a balancing wheel in the governmental structure, a great social vitaliser, a big enemy of tyrants, the right arm of liberty, an exposer of public corruption, an interpreter of public events and a professional forum for investigative and interpretative journalism." There was barely five per cent of development reporting in the Indian press in the sixties and seventies. According to the Press Commission, it was only later that language papers in Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Hindi and Marathi started giving appreciable space to coverage of topics such as health, family welfare, industry, science and technology, agriculture, education and public utilities. But the reporting or coverage was poor in quality, largely due to the fact that the reporters depended heavily on official handouts or briefings and did not make field study or personal observations. Reading the reports one hardly got a feel of participation in the programme or social change. According to one writer : "These reports did not provide a glimpse of what the beneficiaries directly felt about the programme or said what they got out of them . . . . The reporter of big and small newspapers can help to bring dynamism to the process in rural areas by keeping their feet on the rural soil, report as correctly as possible the facts and events and interpret them to the best of their light."

"The free press in a developing country," the Press Commission said, "should be more socially conscious and enterprising." It noted that development reporting should "tell the story of what is going well as well as of what is going wrong. It should investigate into the reasons for success as well as failure at different places under different conditions, of various development programmes affecting the lives of common people . . . . Most of our newspapers merely carry official handouts giving statistics of milch cattle or poultry

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enabled to be brought under these schemes, the man-hours of work provided or the number of persons made literate. They do not enable the reader to 'meet' the extension workers who are the agents of change or the beneficiaries of the programmes and to hear what they have to say in their own words about their triumph and difficulties. The reporting of non-official initiative in rural development, educational reforms, leprosy relief and other areas is even less extensive than indepth reporting of the implementation of official development programmes." The commission said that lack of follow-up was a widespread failing of the Indian press. "It is not enough to report," it said, "in depth, a present problem ; it is necessary to keep track of the further development of a situation that has been reported, in context and depth."

Economic journalism has made great strides in the past two decades both as part of the contents of general newspapers and through the emergence of specialised dailies and periodicals. But as the Press Commission remarked, the press has yet to become a guide to the general reader for the explanation "in simple language, even of such frequently used expressions as national income and per capita income. Nor has such effort been made to probe the validity of these indices as indicators of the country's economic health or of the well-being of citizens. Similarly, the reader frequently comes across news reports speaking of 'poverty line' without explanation of how the line is defined." When the first Press Commission reported in 1954, there was no daily exclusively devoted to economic or financial matters. Today, there are a number of financial dailies including the *Financial Express* and *Economic Times* (1961) and the *Business Standard* (1975). These are in English, and there are very few in Indian languages.

A notable feature of the Indian press is the prominence they give to astrological predictions. With very few exceptions, all newspapers, dailies and periodicals, carry them as a regular item every week. The first Press Commission had condemned this practice and said : "The spread of the habit of consultation of, and reliance upon, astrological predictions, particularly of the nature and in the manner they are published at

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present, is certain to produce an unsettling effect on the minds of readers. We would describe the practice of publishing such predictions as undesirable." The second Press Commission endorsed this view and said : "We are of the view that editors of general interest dailies and periodicals who believe in promoting a scientific temper among their readers and in combating superstition and fatalism should discontinue the publication of astrological predictions." But apparently this sane advice has fallen on deaf ears for there has been no diminution in the publication of what the stars forecast in the daily, or periodical press, English or language.

The Indian daily press continues to suffer from a shortage of pictorial coverage of news. The Press Commission observed: "There is still a general lack of understanding of the scope of photographs in journalism among newspaper editors who have a bias for the verbal medium . . . . To most editors, the photo department in a newspaper is a part of the production department rather than the editorial department . . . . Photo journalism does not in most cases form a part of journalism training." News magazines in recent years have filled the gap to a certain extent and with the adoption of latest techniques, the reproduction of pictures has vastly improved.

While the freedom of the press has been assured, the freedom of the editor has been left in doubt. In recent years many Indian editors have had to resign their jobs or been dismissed in their bid to assert their independence and protest against proprietorial interference. James Cameron put the problem in a nutshell when he asked : "How is it possible to equate the commercial success that is indispensable to a liberated paper with the business interests that will always encroach upon that liberty?" The Press Commission said : "The interest of the owner of a newspaper generally lies in its economic success. However, commercial considerations ought not to override editorial considerations. The freedom of the owner is only a part of the freedom of the press. The owner has the basic right to have his point of view expressed through the newspaper. In the case of a large newspaper operating in modern conditions, this right of the owner should not extend

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beyond laying down the policy of the newspaper and the appointment of an editor of his choice. But the editor chosen ought to be a man of known ability and integrity and should have sufficient authority to conduct the newspaper in public interest while following the policy laid down by the owner."

"Journalistic freedom", the Commission said, "is the heart of the freedom of the press. To maintain a free traffic in ideas for the good of the community and to discharge his social functions, the journalist should have an atmosphere of freedom. But the unity of purpose of a newspaper can be ensured only by the development of a spirit of cooperative enterprise whereby everyone realises that he is working towards a common goal. The effective exercise of journalistic freedom depends largely on the editor. The freedom and independence of the editor is the crux of the matter."

The commission found that by and large "the policy of the newspaper is not reduced to writing and if there are differences of opinion between the editor and the proprietor over a matter of policy, the former is obliged to quit. The status of the editor varies from paper to paper and in many cases it is not what it should be. It appears that in many cases editors do not have enough say in the selection and appointment of journalistic staff and assignment of professional duties to them." The commission which held editorial independence to be of the utmost importance, suggested as a safeguard against proprietorial or management interference in editorial independence, the appointment of a Board of Trustees as a buffer between the management and the editor. The Board, it said, would ensure that the policy of the paper is carried out and it would act as an empire in disputes between the management and the editor. The trustees of the Board would be public men of unquestionable integrity and of eminence in the field of journalism, law, science and other learned professions. This recommendation was not accepted by some members of the commission and it does not seem to have had any positive response from newspaper owners.

A classic example where the editor was sacked because he would not submit to the dictates of the proprietor was that

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of B.G. Verghese, editor of the *Hindustan Times*, who was dismissed by G.D. Birla, owner of the paper. Verghese had been press adviser to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and when he left that job Mrs. Gandhi, it was stated, recommended him to Birla. Birla appointed him editor of the *Hindustan Times* but very soon he found Verghese was pursuing an editorial policy which was at variance with his own intentions and objective. Since Verghese proved not amenable, he sacked him. The working journalists led by the I.F.W.J. protested against this action and went on a strike. They took the matter to the Press Council and said that Verghese had been penalised because he would not follow a particular editorial policy as a matter of conscience. The Press Council pleaded helplessne s in the matter and declined to interfere. Many years later, the noted journalist Khushwant Singh suffered the same fate when he had to quit as editor of the *Hindustan Times* in similar circumstances. For Khushwant Singh it was the second time such a thing had happened. Earlier, after a successful term as editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India* (a *Times of India* publication) he found one morning his chair occupied by another editor and the notice of discharge waiting for him. Arun Shourie had a similar experience when he was Executive editor of the *Indian Express* before he joined the *Times of India* and, curiously enough, he came back to the *Indian Express* early in 1987 and within a few months the editor, Suman Dubey, had to go, leaving the post vacant for Shourie for whom the *Express* became the biggest and most powerful forum for the anti-Rajiv Gandhi campaign.

J.N. Sahni, the veteran nationalist-newspaper editor, made a caustic comment on the attitude of Indian editors. "Under the British," he wrote, "the fear of iron chains or a whole series of coercive measures threatened press freedom. These also served as a challenge which journalists had to meet. After independence, silver chains made cowards of many a star writer than penal restrictions. To ensure big salaries and expensive comforts, one naturally had to first serve those who controlled the papers and only then the common people. With independence, editorial salaries had spiralled up to

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impressive figures. Most editors, therefore, struggled between the prudence of self-interest and the abandon of self-expression. The result was higher salaries and controlled opinions. With fabulous investments at stake, 'responsible' editors could not play ducks and drakes with policy. At the same time, high circulations had to be built up to attract maximum advertising at the highest rates. Unless readers felt attracted and interested, high circulations were not possible. Proprietors, therefore, were prepared to pay high salaries to able editors who combined tact with adaptability. Failing that, a few preferred to become editors themselves. Through the process of orientation and adaptation to changed conditions, the Indian press began to attract at its helm as much ability as elevated ignorance . . . . The Indian press could, therefore, be appropriately described as a capably edited institution working under proprietorial control through 'confidence men' where necessary in an atmosphere of legal freedom." Another journalist of standing who found improvement in all branches of journalism added: "It is only in editorial writing that I would hesitate to make that assertion. For the editorial writers of old, especially in the nationalist papers had greater passion and a loftier cause. Gone are the giants."

In an interview to the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Ramnath Goenka, the press baron, was asked: "Is there any journalist around whose work you like, who you find is a crusader in the real sense of the word?" "I'm afraid none." "Question: Is there any columnist you read regularly whose opinion you respect? Answer: None that I can think of right now." In reply to another question, Goenka said: "Where is the talent to hire? Where are the editors you can attract? There just are not enough editors around, I mean, good editors, men of courage and integrity."

A major problem of Indian journalism today is the big business ownership of multiple newspapers. The Press Commission noted: "It appears to us that a very significant part of the press in the country in general and a major portion of the important daily press in particular is controlled by persons having strong links with other businesses or industries."

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According to *Press in India, 1984,* published by the registrar of newspapers, there were 83 common ownership units in 1983 (a common ownership unit is one which has two or more news interest newspapers of which at least one is a daily). These units owned among themselves 288 news interest newspapers (245 dailies, 38 weeklies and other periodicals). Circulation of the daily newspapers owned by these units represented 68.12 per cent of the total circulation of all dailies in the country in 1982. Among the big units are Bennett Coleman Company (15 news interest publications) and the *Express* group (31 news interest publications). The big units dominated not only English journalism but also language journalism. The percentages are English: 85; Bengali: 70.9; Gujarati: 81.4; Hindi: 41.2. Eleven big units published 34 dailies from metropolitan cities. Hindi led all other newspapers in 1982 with 5655 papers (28.4 per cent) with English coming second with 3689 papers (18.5 per cent) and Bengali third with 1537 papers (7.7 per cent).

The Press Commission said: "When newspapers are controlled by other big businesses they become vehicles of expression of the ideology of their owners and the selection, presentation and display of news in such newspapers would be dictated by that ideology. The newspaper industry in their hands becomes involuntarily the cultural arm of other businesses and industries and takes a vested interest in maintaining the existing socio-economic system. The newspapers controlled by them may be selective in their presentation of news and views in return for benefits conferred in respect of their other business interests . . . if all major newspapers come to represent a similar if not the same viewpoint as is not unlikely when all of them belong to large private business enterprises, a viewpoint which is against the interest of private big business may not receive a fair deal in their columns . . . . It is enough for our purpose to say that legislative measures needed for achieving the goals of our state run counter to the vested interests of the owners of these big newspapers who have large interests in other businesses." At one time, delinking and diffusion of newspaper ownership was considered by the

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government and in 1971 a draft bill was even prepared for the purpose but it was not proceeded with.

Should there be a code of ethics for journalists and newspapers and if so who should frame it? This has been a hotly debated question and an answer has not yet been found. Government spokesmen have made it clear that it is a matter to be decided by the press and they would not take any initiative. Arun Shourie has said that a code is necessary because "standards of the press are indeed very low" and they should be improved. "The prevailing laxity", he said, "harms the community as well as individuals". He thought that a code would be a shield for the pressman, a code that would not be just an ideal but which when worked "will have the virtue of drawing out the best in the journalist and will constitute a protection so that should the authorities attempt to put down a person adhering to the code, they will at once put themselves in the wrong."

The *Indian Express* said in an editorial: "For the press as a whole the path of self-control remains the safest and the most effective. A code imposed by an outside agency, even by the Press Council, could become the thin end of a wedge of governmental intervention. But a journalist's credo, voluntary and gallant, is surely necessary. Such a credo would despise falsehood and indecency, call for accuracy in facts, impartiality in display and swiftness in admitting error. A code of this kind will not make a saint of the all-too-human journalist, but his awareness of its contents can make him a worthier citizen. An unprofessional press hesitating to set its own standards might invite harsher laws. Equally, a press inspired by a professional credo will be the more able, should a test occur, to stand up to opponents of media freedom."

At present, the only body which watches the conduct of the press and entertains complaints against it is the Press Council which, however, has no punitive powers. The utmost it can do is to censure a newspaper if warnings and admonition fail to produce results. The Press Council, supported by the Press Commission, has urged the government to amend the Press Council Act to give it more teeth. The council is against

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framing a code of ethics. It said it would build up such a code in course of time through precedents established in the process of dealing with specific complaints. The council has held that mere enunciation of certain basic principles in general terms had not proved helpful when it came to applying them to individual cases. In its view, if these principles were to be reduced to a kind of code of conduct or journalistic propriety by the council, they would have a tendency to attain a degree of rigidity which might give rise to difficulties. The Press Commission's conclusion was: "We are of the view that it would not be desirable to draw up a code of ethics for newspapers. As the Press Council has maintained, such a code could be built up case by case over a period of time."

The commission suggested that the Press Council should enter into arrangement with selected university departments of journalism, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication and the Press Institute of India for monitoring the performance of newspapers in respect of important issues from time to time in a given language or languages. The commission observed that the underlying principle that "governs or should govern the press is that the gathering and selling of news and views is essentially a public trust. It is based upon a tacit contract with the public that the news shall be true to the best of the knowledge and belief of those who offer it for sale and that their comment upon it shall be sincere according to their lights. A journalist who sells or is a party to selling news that he knows to be false or only partly true or who trims opinions so as to make them palatable, is more guilty than a tradesman who gives short weight or a manufacturer who offers adulterated goods. The spreading of false statements is more harmful than the sale of material wares under false pretences. The journalist who betrays his trust is more blameworthy than a dishonest tradesman. Journalism as the basis of the newspaper industry, holds a special position because its raw material is really the public mind and it trades chiefly in moral values."

Chanchal Sarkar has advocated that Indian newspapers should employ ombudsmen as watchdogs on the doings of the newspaper and as intermediaries between the newspaper and

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the public. In the past 18 years, he said, many newspapers in the U.S.A., Japan, Sweden and Canada had appointed ombudsmen with gratifying results. Some ombudsmen wrote a column in their newspaper analysing controversies about news coverage by the newspaper and some confined themselves to sending memos to top brass of the newspaper and negotiating to have readers' grievances redressed. Some put memos on the notice board for all the staff to read. No Indian newspaper has yet decided to have an ombudsman. "Is it arrogance, lack of courage, or an inability to take criticism which is very much a characteristic of Indian public affairs?" Chanchal Sarkar asked.

One of the oft heard complaints against the Indian press is that it does not publish contradictions or refutations promptly and prominently. According to one commentator: "Certain newspapers show a general reluctance to publish contradictions unless the matter is brought before the Press Council. If the right of reply is properly understood and given effect to, the grievances of numerous persons would stand redressed."

The Indian press today is free but it does not have a wide enough reach. It has an urban and middle class base which limits its contribution towards making the development process more widely participatory. Daily newspapers and periodicals published from the metropolitan cities, especially Delhi, have hitherto commanded a degree of attention which is out of all proportion to their share of the total circulation. Today, however, the difference between the metropolitan and provincial papers, between English and language papers is not so great. In fact, some small town papers have gone in for more advanced technology than the big ones. In the words of a commentator: "There is a lack of improvement in the quality of articulation in the language press. There is a tendency to go away from the speech of the common people, from the spoken word." But as the Press Commission has remarked, it is the language press "which is becoming increasingly relevant to the bulk of our people with the growing use of Indian languages as the media of education. Apart from

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trend which will continue, the relevance of, and demand for, languages newspapers will be enhanced to the extent that they acquire a development orientation." It is the language press which holds the key to the future growth and strength of Indian journalism.

The latter half of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's prime ministership was a period of political unrest, communal eruptions and administrative problems in the north-west and north-east states. Mrs. Gandhi had her hands full tackling Sikh extremist violence in Punjab and the violent agitation in Assam over the nationality question, not to speak of the widespread discontent and corruption in her own Congress (I) party and the deteriorating relations with the non-Congress governments in the states, especially West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. In Punjab, she ordered the army to enter the Golden Temple and flush out the extremists and that led to the outbreak of terrorism by misguided Sikh youths which assumed monstrous proportions resulting in enormous loss of innocent lives and property and which continues unabated to this day. Her partymen indulged in attempts to topple non-Congress governments in states and with disastrous results in Andhra Pradesh where for a brief period they were able to instal a dissident leader as chief minister with the connivance of the governor. And the country's situation became grave when in October, 1984, Mrs. Gandhi was shot dead by her Sikh security guards. Mrs. Gandhi's eldest son, Rajiv Gandhi, was quickly sworn in as prime minister by President Zail Singh. There was a wave of sympathy throughout the country for the youngest prime minister of India and this was reflected in the general elections of 1985 when the Congress (I) was returned to power at the centre with a stupendous majority crushing all opposition parties.

In an effort to stem the tide of terrorism in Punjab, Rajiv Gandhi signed an accord with the Akali leader, Sant Longowal, agreeing to most of the Akali demands but this did not solve the problem as there was delay in the implementation of the accord and Sant Longowal himself was assassinated by the extremists. He also entered into a pact with the agitators

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in Assam. The Congress (I) lost the ensuing elections in Punjab and Assam but Rajiv Gandhi was not worried; his partymen were. Rajiv Gandhi was a great success in the international arena and was acclaimed as a statesman. At home he was called "Mr. Clean" as a tribute to his dynamic leadership and incorruptibility. But within two years Rajiv Gandhi's high ranking popularity took a nose dive and by early 1987 an unprecedented high velocity attack was mounted against him by the print media and at least one newspaper accused him bluntly of accepting bribes and urged the president to dismiss him.

Indian newspapers and news magazines had a field day from the closing years of Mrs. Gandhi's regime and circulations soared and more newspapers and magazines made their appearance, to share in the prosperity. The era of "controversial journalism" began in full blast and the politicians of all hues, and glamorous and not so glamorous personalities in other walks of life became willing instruments of polemical and character assassination journalism. Rumour mills and gossip vendors worked overtime and the reputation of no politician, however mighty and powerful he might be, was safe from the devastating pen of the so-called investigative journalists of the news magazines, who, it seemed, vied with one another in destructive criticism. It became, in fact, a competition as to who could dig up more dirt and damage the reputation of the greatest number of people. In this most rewarding type of journalism the device of the "interview" was used with telling effect and a tape recorder was the constant companion of every investigative reporter. These stories were displayed oftentimes without regard to the laws of libel and defamation to get the maximum impact. One prominent weekly carried the report of an interview with a chief minister who stoutly denied he was a sex maniac and did not do anything wrong. But in the main story the writer stuck to his defamatory charges and it was reflected in the lead and heading. In another instance, a chief minister who entertained a well known journalist made some injudicious remarks off the record and when the journalist

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published them breaking the unwritten understanding, the chief minister got into trouble with his party and ultimately lost his job. In the case of at least two politicians, the interviewing journalist by cleverly drawing them out and allowing them to satisfy their ego and let off steam was able to publish "juicy" interviews which led to their being expelled from the party. A leading national newspaper one day carried this heading in bold type and prominently displayed: UP chief ordered 'massacre' of youths. The heading was based on an interview by a politician and the story began with this lead: "Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister V.B. Singh ordered the massacre of 81 youths belonging to a particular community at Hassimpura area of Meerut on May 22 night in a bid to 'teach them a lesson', Lok Dal (A) Secretary Subramanyam Swamy alleged here today."

Not all news magazines lived by sensation and controversies. Some have matured and proved to be reliable and balanced in their approach to news stories. The fortnightlies, *India Today* and *Frontline* and the weekly *Sunday*, may be cited as examples. One noteworthy feature of the news magazines is that every week or fortnight, they almost always carry the same stories or interviews with the same personalities and if you read one you have read them all except that the angle and the emphasis may be different. By covering the same ground, the news magazines, both English and language, have established a wide circle of readership in large parts of the country and this has led to the emergence of an educated electorate which is well aware of the political developments in the country and the personalities involved in them.

The newspapers, both English and language, are, with a few exceptions, free from the type of journalism specialised in by the news magazines. In fact, investigative journalism or what passes as such in India, has not percolated to daily newspapers in a big way yet. But there are at least two English dailies, *The Statesman* and *The Indian Express*, who claim investigative reporting as their strong point. The Insight Team of the *Statesman* has been responsible for many expose stories and the *Indian Express* has not lagged far behind. With

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Arun Shourie back at the helm (he resigned his job in the *Times of India* and rejoined the *Indian Express* as editor in 1987) the tempo of investigative journalism has quickened. The *Indian Express* today is in the vanguard of the newspapers campaigning against Rajiv Gandhi and calling for his resignation as prime minister. It has waged a long and relentless battle and it has left no stone unturned to achieve its objective. At the height of the controversy over the relations between the prime minister and the president which was triggered by reports that the prime minister was not keeping the president informed of developments at home and abroad and that he was not meeting him as often as he should, causing unhappiness to the president, it was the *Indian Express* which reproduced the copy of a letter written by President Zail Singh to Rajiv Gandhi contradicting his statement in Parliament about his relations with the president and detailing the wrongs done to him. The publication of the letter opened the floodgates of a political controversy which reached a stage where the president was advised by the *Indian Express* and opposition parties to dismiss Rajiv Gandhi for violating the Constitution.

Even as this battle royal was going on with Rashtrapati Bhawan and its occupant claiming centre stage in the press and the evolution of "peephole journalism" in which some newspapers and magazines indulged to aggravate the crisis, the Fairfax issue exploded and with it the V.P. Singh affair. Fairfax is an American investigating agency which, it was alleged, was employed by V.P. Singh while he was finance minister to detect economic offenders abroad. By the time the story broke out in the course of a raid on the house of a journalist connected with the *Indian Express*, V.P. Singh had been shifted to the Defence Ministry. There was an outcry that Singh who had wanted to bring within the scope of investigation Amitabh Bachchan, the film star turned politician and close friend of the prime minister, and his brother Ajitabh, had been punished for embarrassing Rajiv Gandhi. The press called Singh "Mr. Cleaner" and Rajiv Gandhi was found to be a little less than clean.

As Rajiv Gandhi tried to ward off this challenge to his

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authority and reputation by appointing a commission of two Supreme Court judges to conduct an enquiry into the Fairfax affair. V.P. Singh as defence minister dropped a bombshell. He told reporters travelling with him in a plane on official business that in a submarine deal by India with a West German company, an Indian middleman had been paid a huge commission and that he had ordered a departmental enquiry. Rajiv Gandhi had been in charge of defence before V.P. Singh took over and so his name was again brought in. Hardly had the ink dried on this sensational revelation than the Swedish Radio dropped the biggest bombshell. In a broadcast it said that in an arms deal between Bofors, a Swedish company, and India, bribes running into crores of rupees had been paid to Indian officials and politicians. All hell broke loose and the country was in an uproar. The *Indian Express* in an editorial which it carried on its front page said in so many words that Rajiv Gandhi was guilty of corruption and appealed to the president to dismiss him. The cry was taken up by other newspapers and magazines and politicians joined the fray and there was enough and more for the avid newspaper reader to munch and talk about. Rajiv Gandhi was in deep trouble and there were scandals galore which made his position extremely vulnerable. Everyday newspapers and periodicals were publishing interviews with Swedish Radio, Swedish government officials, Bofors company officials and their own interpretations and surmises. But the truth was never established. While it was clear that a huge amount was paid and deposited in a Swiss bank account, it was not known to whom it was paid and why.

The government denied that any middleman was employed and asserted that one of the conditions of the deal was that no middleman should be used. Rajiv Gandhi's denials and defence of government failed to carry conviction. Confusion was worse confounded when V.P. Singh resigned from the Cabinet and this was taken by Rajiv's critics as vindictive action against an honest colleague who had exposed shady deals. Even Rajiv's announcement that a Parliamentary Committee would go into the Bofors deal and the charges of

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corruption did not satisfy the newspaper and opposition critics and they wanted their pound of flesh. A well-known Supreme Court lawyer was given space in the *Indian Express* everyday to put searching questions to the prime minister and charge him with complicity in shady deals of his friends and relatives. This went on for nearly a month and gained wide currency all over the country. This lawyer and another opponent wrote to President Zail Singh asking for permission to prosecute Rajiv Gandhi for corruption. This again brought the president and the prime minister on collision course and the newspapers and journals ran wild with speculation that the president might take some drastic action against the prime minister. Every day the question was posed: Will he? The situation bristled with graver possibilities when the opposition parties (barring the Communists) and some in the Congress (I) itself pressed Zail Singh to stand for presidentship for a second term. There was a riot of speculation and guessing games in the press on the president's intentions and some overenthusiastic journalists wrote that if Zail Singh contested as an opposition candidate, a sizeable number of Congress (I) members of Parliament would vote for him and ensure his election. Whatever might be the intention of the president, the ground was cut from under his feet by the two Communist parties which rejected his candidature. The other opposition parties were thereupon forced to support the candidate named by the Communists. The Congress (I) members voted solidly for the party candidate and Mr. R. Venkataraman was elected president by an overwhelming majority. But Rajiv Gandhi's worries were not over. His party's total rout in the Haryana elections in which an opposition party alliance won by a staggering majority gave fodder to the press which predicted the disintegration of the Congress (I) and the fall of its bastions in the Hindi north.

Zail Singh, who had maintained studied silence at the height of the controversy, gave vent to his feelings and emotions a few days before he shed office in frank interviews to three news magazines which made them their cover stories. The future of the Congress (I) and the growing dissidence in the party dominated the news and editorial columns of the

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press and when Rajiv Gandhi in his capacity as party president expelled four party MPs including V.P. Singh for "anti-party activities," it was seen by opposition parties and the press as a sign that the party was in shambles and many of them said that the days of the Rajiv Gandhi Government were numbered.

During this exciting drama and bewildering political developments, all in the space of a few months, the press played a major role in gathering, interpreting and presenting the news to a readership hungry for information and to be educated on what was going on. There was partisanship, of course, much disinformation and slanting of news and open accusation of the prime minister without producing evidence, a great deal of speculative reports which passed for hard facts and inviting a credibility gap. But the fact remained that the press was the one source of information for the people (AIR and Doordarshan being tainted as official mouthpieces) and, by and large, this responsibility was discharged by the press with enthusiasm and in a professional manner. Many newspapers and journals conducted Gallup polls with the help of professional marketing research groups in the metropolitan cities on what people thought of the prime minister, his policies, his feud with the president and his party. The results were displayed with great prominence. Columnists, mostly specially those writing for periodicals, came into their own and their analysis and interpretation of current events were read with avidity. Kuldip Nayar, M.V. Kamath, M.J. Akbar and Khushwant Singh have a large circle of readers.

The government's attitude to the press, both at the Centre and in the states has been one of non-interference. There is no sign of open hostility or of benevolence. In at least two states, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, Bills were introduced in the legislature to curb the freedom of the press by the government but they were withdrawn after vehement protests from press and platform by journalist organisations and public bodies. There were sporadic reports of harassment of journalists in some states but what created a sensation and led to country-wide angry protests and demonstrations was the action of the Tamil Nadu Assembly in sentencing the editor of *Ananda*

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Vikatan, a Tamil weekly, to a term of imprisonment for publishing a cartoon which was considered derogatory of the legislature. The editor's contention was that the cartoon was a humorous drawing and intended to be a joke. It did not cast any aspersion on any particular person or persons. The speaker of the Assembly sent a warrant for his arrest. The police picked him up as he was returning home from office and drove him to prison where he spent the night as a convict. The entire country seemed to rise in protest at this outrageous action and within 48 hours the speaker was forced to rescind the decision of the Assembly and order the release of the editor who became a hero overnight.

The Indian newspapers and periodicals today are riding the crest of a boom which in the prevailing developing political situation and a new awareness among the rising middle class is likely to persist for a long time. The advantage, as has been noted already, is with the language press but the English press is still supreme in many fields and in its resources and respectability. The English newspapers cost more and make a big dent in the domestic budget. But today, the newspaper is a must in the urban areas and the habit is spreading fast to rural areas too. Unlike in the days of colonial rule, the newspaper today is a profitable business and it is being commercialised so fast that the reading public has started complaining that news is being sacrificed for advertisements. The Indian newspaper generally does not carry a full budget of foreign news and not many newspapers have foreign correspondents. Many stop with correspondents in London and Washington and none in Moscow. There is near total reliance on foreign news agencies for what little foreign news is published and there is a virtual blackout of neighbouring countries like Burma and Nepal. With the advent of radio and television which broadcast news bulletins by the hour, newspapers in the West and America have gone in for more indepth and interpretative news presentation and reporting, thus, enabling the reader to understand the background and meaning of news he has already heard on the radio or TV. Not much in this respect has been done by Indian newspapers which repeat the news already purveyed by radio and TV.

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Journalism has become a coveted profession in India and the educated youth, men and women, fresh from college are choosing it as a career in larger numbers. Employment opportunities are growing with the expansion of the newspaper industry in diverse fields like film magazines, sports journals and women's periodicals in addition to the regular newspapers and news magazines. The rewards are most satisfying. The emoluments are attractive and the prestige and influence commanded by a working journalist are considerable.

We have described the condition of the working journalist under alien rule in a previous chapter. The need to improve it and give dignity and sustenance to journalists who played an important role in the affairs of the nation was realised after freedom was won. M. Chalapati Rau, a great editor (whose profile appears in an earlier chapter) was the moving spirit behind the working journalists movement which took strong roots under his able guidance and stewardship. He founded the Indian Federation of Working Journalists in 1950 and was its president for three terms. He nurtured it and made it strong to fight for the rights of working journalists and for a living wage for them. As a member of the first Press Commission appointed in 1952, he was largely instrumental in the commission recommending the appointment of a wage board for working journalists. The commission found that the emoluments received by journalists were on the whole unsatisfactory. It could not undertake a detailed investigation for fixing scales for different categories of employees. But it recognised the necessity of fixing a minimum wage for journalist employees and made recommendations relating to the minimum wages to be paid to them. As we have noted in an earlier chapter, the Government of India accepted this recommendation and constituted a Wage Board for working journalists under the chairmanship of H.V. Divatia in 1957. Besides fixing minimum wages for all categories of journalists, the Board brought within the definition of working journalists proof-readers and examiners. This was opposed by some newspaper owners and when the Wage Board's recommendations became law they went to court but failed in their effort

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to exclude proof-readers and examiners from being treated as working journalists. The Wage Board's decisions came as a boon to working journalists. They were assured of a minimum wage, with suitable grades, to be paid regularly within a specified date every month and their hours of work were fixed and a weekly rest day assured.

A second Wage Board was appointed in 1977 under the chairmanship of Justice Palekar. The Board, however, could not complete its work as representatives of newspaper owners, the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and the Indian Language Newspaper Society, resigned from the Board owing to differences. The Government of India through an ordinance in 1979 appointed Justice Palekar as a one-man tribunal to give an award on working journalists wages. Justice Palekar gave his award in 1980 and it provoked opposition from newspaper owners many of whom challenged it in the courts. The Press Commission noted that many small papers had not been able to implement the Palekar award (for journalists and non-journalist employees) and some big newspaper undertakings had also not fully implemented the awards. The commission was told by newspaper owners that the Palekar award would adversely affect the economy of newspapers, especially the small newspapers. Small newspapers told it that with regard to some categories, a small newspaper with a gross revenue of only Rs. 50,000 and a big newspaper with a gross revenue of Rs. 10 lakhs would stand on the same footing. Representatives of the I.F.W.J. told the commission that right from the time of the first Wage Board, newspapers had been saying that they would close down if they had to implement the awards. But, they added, this had not happened and, on the other hand, newspapers were flourishing. There was unrest among working journalists and the I.F.W.J. organised demonstrations and strikes to compel the newspapers to implement the awards.

A third Wage Board was appointed by the Government of India in July, 1985 under the chairmanship of Justice U.N. Bachawat. It presented an interim report in 1986 and recommended interim relief of 7.5 per cent of basic pay. This was

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considered too low by the I.F.W.J. and other journalist bodies and the matter was raised in Parliament with a demand to increase the quantum of relief. The government announced on May 31, 1986, that it had increased the interim relief to 15 per cent of basic pay with effect from June 1 of that year. There were strong protests from newspaper organisations against the government action which was described as arbitrary.

Besides the minimum wages fixed by the various Wage Boards and assured security of service, working journalists enjoy several concessions from the government, both Central and of the States. Correspondents accredited to the Information Bureau in Delhi and to some state governments are allotted government residential accommodation at rents which are very much below the commercial level. In Delhi there is a separate press pool of 110 dwelling units. In many states there is reservation of housing plots for journalists. The Press Commission reported that some state governments did not even bother to collect the concessional rent "and the journalists concerned are happy not to pay". The commission expressed its opposition to grant of housing concession to journalists "as we are unable to persuade ourselves that accredited correspondents as a class are more useful to society than teachers or public health staff." Press correspondents are also given travel facilities, free passes on state transport and rail fare concessions. The Tamil Nadu Government has initiated a scheme of pensions to old, retired and indigent journalists.

Politicians have sought the favour of journalists in their own way. The *Indian Express* (Madras) carried this item on its front page on July 24, 1987, with the heading "Spreading money culture": "How much does it cost to get a news item published in a newspaper? According to the Tamil Nadu Congress (I) Committee's Labour Cell it would be Rs. 25. The convenor of the now revived T.N.C.C. (I) Labour Cell, A.K. Shanmughasundaram, had on Thursday called a press conference at a hotel in Egmore to explain the steps to be taken by the cell to propagate the 'progressive and welfare measures taken by the Congress (I) Government'. At the end of the press

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conference, as the dozen reporters came out of the hall, two of the cell's low level functionaries were busy trying to distribute plain brown envelopes to the reporters. The contents of the envelope—Rs. 25 in currency notes. The culture of giving 'envelopes' is a recent development in Madras news circles as regards politicians. One has, of course, come across businessmen and film producers distributing such largesse at press conferences."

The working journalists movement in India was unique as it was able to achieve its aims—protection of the rights of working journalists, a minimum wage and security of service—without a struggle, after the country became free. This was largely due to the fact that leaders of the freedom movement and the working journalists had marched hand in hand against a common foe, sharing persecution and suffering for a noble cause. When freedom came, the role played by journalists was readily acknowledged and when the I.F.W.J. was formed by veterans of the freedom battle, there was instant support from the new free India government. Among the early leaders who worked hard to strengthen the movement, besides the founder, Chalapati Rau, were J.P. Chathurvedi and T.R. Ramaswami. The Working Journalists Act of 1955 which they were able to see through on the statute book was unique as there is no similar legislation anywhere in the world for the protection of working journalists. The working journalists movement split in 1971 and a rival organisation called the National Union of Journalists (India) was formed with L. Meenakshisundaram and Pritish Chakravarthi as its chief sponsors. Both the I.F.W.J. and N.U.J. are recognised by the Government of India.

Before independence, there were no institutions to train journalists and journalism was not a course of study in universities. There was no prescribed qualification for a journalist. Anyone could become a journalist who had the daring, courage and enterprise. Most newspapers worked with raw hands who learnt as they worked. The great journalists of the past were the products of training in the newspaper by trial and error. The position today is vastly different. Almost every univer-

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mass communication) and many private institutions like the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, have sprung up which, with government approval, teach journalism. These universities and institutions send out from their portals hundreds of boys and girls every year as fully qualified journalists. For practical training in journalistic skills, laboratory journals are brought out by the students in universities and other teaching institutions. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication, established in 1965 is a premier institution offering training in journalism and mass communication. Situated in Delhi and administered by an autonomous society and funded by grants by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the IIMC offers courses which comprehend all means of communication, traditional and modern, with emphasis on communication for development.

There is also the Press Institute of India which was started in 1963 by some leading newspapers and is affiliated to the International Press Institute. It organises seminars, workshops and courses of study for journalists and those connected with the mass media at different levels. In its own words, its aim is "to provide a professional institute for the training of Indian journalists, for the dissemination of knowledge about better techniques of production and of gathering and distributing news, for elevating the standards of Indian journalism and for training Indian journalists to a high awareness of their responsibility."

At present, facilities for training of journalists in English journalism are more than for language journalism. In many states, reporters and sub-editors of language papers lack training and there is no place where they can be trained. The Press Commission noted that large numbers of female students were joining journalism courses in universities and private institutions and it wanted that "ways should be found to attract trained women journalists in larger numbers to the press, particularly, Indian language newspapers, by providing facilities such as transport to their homes after late duty or night shifts." It suggested the establishment of a National Council for Journalism Training, preferably to be sponsored

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by the Press Council. It should comprise not only journalism teachers but also newspaper publishers and editors and distinguished men of letters. It said such a body could institute fellowship for training and research, and awards for meritorious performance in journalism on the lines of the Pulitzer Awards in the U.S.A.

Indian journalism is today 200 years old. It has come a long way from the two-page scandal sheet of James Augustus Hicky which passed for a newspaper in 1780 and which introduced an essentially Western media into India. It passed through many stages in its evolution and there were many occasions and periods in its long, chequered career when it was very nearly crushed out of existence. From the very beginning, the alien rulers hated newspapers and journalists but their hatred and contempt for Indian newspapers was more and the fact that Indian journalism survived their concentrated and sadistic onslaught on the press, especially during the freedom struggle beginning from the 1920s, must be considered a miracle and a tribute to the spirit of sacrifice and patriotism of those pioneers who stood shoulder to shoulder with the freedom fighters. With hardly any resources or equipment and with the Damocles's sword of government suppression hanging over their heads, brave men and women came out to spread the message of freedom and to educate their countrymen on what was happening in the country in improvised and badly printed newspapers and journals. Considering the perils and suffering they went through, their achievement was great and noble. Without them, the clarion call for freedom would not have reached the remote corners of the motherland and roused the masses.

The Indian journalists of today are the rich inheritors of a glorious tradition of dedicated journalism, a saga of undaunted courage and determination to fight for a cause, of a noble band of men and women who took Indian journalism to the pinnacle of fame and achievement. We are on the threshold of a new revolution, a revolution in technique and production of the most modern newspaper or news magazine. Great changes have come about in the gathering, style, presentation

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and interpretation of news. Vast strides have been made in reaching out to the people even in remote areas, informing and educating them on the day-to-day developments in the political, economic and social fields. There is a new breed of journalists, educated and trained, with uninhibited style and curiosity and perseverance who have made today's journalism vibrant and active. The Indian press is now a powerful organ of public opinion and it has come to occupy a position of influence in the body politic. There is greater recognition of its potentialities for good and also for evil. The task before it is immense; it has to serve as a watchdog of the interests of the country and the people and it must expose misdeeds, maladministration, official lapses and social evils without fear or favour and it must present the news with accuracy and impartiality, leaving opinion free. There is a great future for Indian journalism.

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16

POSTSCRIPT

The year 1988 proved to be a landmark in the history of Indian journalism. This was the year in which Indian journalism stood up and fought valiantly when it saw the freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution under grave threat through the Defamation Bill introduced in Parliament by the Rajiv Gandhi Government. It led to a confrontation with the government which lasted nearly a month and ultimately the press emerged victorious and the government suffered a humiliating defeat, being forced to withdraw the bill.

It all began when the government introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 29, 1988, the Defamation Bill, 1988, said to have been in the making for over a year. It was clear that it was aimed at drastically curtailing the tendency of a section of the press to indulge in defamatory journalism through insinuations and innuendos and in the name of investigative journalism, fling unsubstantiated corruption charges against individuals in the corridors of power or supposedly close to the decision makers in government. After the Bofors, West German submarine and Fairfax scandals broke out there was a rash of so-called investigative stories all pointing the accusing finger at someone or other close to the prime minister having received bribes in the deals. The prime minister himself was not spared and was the target of suspicion and collusion. Two newspapers in the forefront of the exposure of alleged corrupt deals by the government were the *Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. The *Statesman* joined them later with the story of kickbacks paid to an Indian by a Japanese firm in a deal with the Oil and Natural Gas Commission. Day after day, these papers unearthed new material relating to the deals and put

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the government and the prime minister in an embarrassing position. A Parliamentary committee was appointed to go into the Bofors deal and find out the truth about the allegations of kickbacks but its report which cleared the government of any malpractice was ridiculed and characterised as partisan by the newspapers and Opposition parties. And the credibility of the government continued to be questioned. There were demands that Rajiv Gandhi should resign and Opposition parties who were vociferous in this were supported by a section of the press. The phenomenon of trial by the press was witnessed in Indian journalism for the first time on a large scale.

It was at this stage that the government introduced the Defamation Bill in the Lok Sabha. It seemed strange and inexplicable that it did not occur to the government that leading representatives of the press, journalists associations and other organisations connected with civil liberties should be consulted and their views taken into consideration before legislation on such an important matter was undertaken. Thereby, the government gave room for the accusation that the "draconian" measure was rushed through the Lok Sabha and would have been similarly got through the Rajya Sabha and made into law if an alert press had not risen in a mighty wave of unanimous protest only too gladly supported by the Opposition parties.

It was stated in the objects and reasons of the bill that the aim was to make publication of imputations falsely alleging commission of offences by a person as an offence. It was said that those who made such imputations "often have no intention of pursuing the matter any further with the appropriate authorities. Their only intention appears to be to bring a person's reputation into question." The government felt it necessary to check this tendency "so that freedom of speech which is the very essence of democracy does not degenerate into mere licence." It was, therefore, considered advisable to have a self-contained law on defamation covering both substantive and procedural aspects. The government also claimed that the recommendations of the Law Commission for amendments to sections of the I.P.C. dealing with defamation and

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punishment and also of the second Press Commission which suggested amendments to the law of defamation in certain respects had been incorporated in the Bill.

The Bill (a) incorporated the existing provisions of chapter XXI of the I.P.C. with certain amendments thereto recommended by the Law Commission; (b) provided for the punishment for publication in any newspaper or periodical of grossly indecent or scurrilous matter or matter intended for blackmail on the lines of the proposed section 292A in the Indian Penal Code Amendment Bill of 1978 which after having been passed by the Rajya Sabha lapsed on the dissolution of the Lok Sabha; (c) gave effect to certain recommendations of the second Press Commission for protecting unintentional defamation, fair comment and certain types of privileged statements; (d) provided for punishment of imputation falsely alleging commission by any person of an offence under any law for the time being in force and to provide for the trial of such offence by a court of sessions.

The bill defined defamation thus: "Whoever by words either spoken or intended to be read or by signs or by visible representations makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person intending to harm or knowing or having reason to believe that such imputation will harm the reputation of such person is said, except in the cases hereinafter excepted, to defame that person." It was explained that it might amount to defamation to impute anything to a deseased person if the imputation would harm the reputation of that person if living and was intended to be hurtful to the feelings of his family or other near relatives. It might amount to defamation to make an imputation concerning a company or an association or collection of persons as such. An imputation in the form of an alternative or expressed ironically might amount to defamation. No imputation is said to harm a person's reputation unless (a) that imputation directly or indirectly in the estimation of others lowers the moral or intellectual character of that person in respect of his caste or his calling or lowers the credit of that person or causes it to be believed that the body of that person is in a loathsome state or in a state generally considered

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as disgraceful or (b) that imputation exposes directly or indirectly such person to hatred, contempt or ridicule or disparages or causes injury to such person in his trade, business, profession, calling or office.

The Bill provided that the offence of defamation would not be attracted to the imputation of anything which is true concerning any person if it be for the public good that the imputation should be made or published and it is a question of fact as to whether it is for the public good. The expression in good faith of any opinion whatever respecting the conduct of a public servant in the discharge of his public functions or respecting his character so far as his character appears in that conduct and no further also will not attract defamation. Similarly, defamation will not be attracted by any expression in good faith of any opinion whatever respecting the conduct of any person touching any public question and respecting his character so far as his character so appears in that conduct and no further. Also exempted is the publication of a substantially true report of the proceedings of a court or tribune or the result of any such proceedings. Another exception is the expression in good faith of any opinion whatever respecting the merit of any case, civil or criminal, which has been decided by a court or respecting the conduct of any person as a party, witness, or agent in any such case or respecting the character of such person so far as the character appears in that conduct and no further. Other exceptions are: (a) the passing in good faith any censure on the conduct of a person by a person having authority over that other person either conferred by law or arising out of a lawful contract made with that other person in matters to which lawful authority relates; (b) the preferring in good faith of an accusation against any person or against any of those who have lawful authority over that person with respect to the subject matter of the accusation; (c) the imputation on the character of another provided that the imputation is made in good faith for the protection of the interest of the person making it or of any other person or for the public good; (d) the conveying of a caution in good faith to one person against

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another provided that such caution is intended for the good of the person to whom it is conveyed or of some person in whom the person is interested or for the public good.

The Bill provided punishment in the case of a first offence with imprisonment for a term up to two years or a fine which may extend to Rs. 2,000 or both and in the case of a second or subsequent offence with imprisonment up to five years or with fine which may extend up to Rs. 5,000 or both.

Where the offence has been committed by publishing an imputation in a newspaper, the court convicting the offender may further order that its judgment shall be published in whole or in part in such newspaper and in such manner as it may specify. The cost of such publication shall be recovered from the convicted person as if it were a fine. The Bill provided that where any matter which is grossly indecent or scurrilous or is intended for blackmail is published in any newspaper or periodical or circular, the author of such matter and the printer, publisher and editor of such newspaper, periodical or circular shall, in the case of first offence, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to two years or with fine which may go up to Rs. 2000 or with both and in the case of a second or subsequent offence, with imprisonment which may extend up to five years and fine which may go up to Rs. 5,000 or both.

When a person pleads unintentional defamation claiming that the objectionable matter was published innocently and makes an offer of amends, the Bill provided that the offer of amends shall be (a) in writing; (b) expressed to be made for the purposes of the section under which he is charged; (c) affirm that the person who has published the matter in question published the matter innocently in relation to the party aggrieved; (d) include an offer to publish or join in the publication of a suitable correction of matter complained of and a sufficient apology. The correction and apology shall be published in the same manner and with the same prominence as the matter alleged to be defamatory was published.

Fair Comment: In action for defamation in respect of any matter consisting partly of allegations of fact and partly of

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expression of opinion, a defence of fair comment shall not fail by reason only that the truth of every allegation of fact is not proved if having regard to such of the facts alleged or referred in the matter complained of, as are proved, the expression of opinion is fair comment.

The bill provided for summary trial of offence in a sessions court which could take cognisance of such offence without the case being committed to it upon a complaint in writing by such person. The sessions court shall try the case in accordance with the procedure for trial of a summons case specified in the code and if the court thinks fit the case may be tried in a summary way and the provision of sections 262 to 264 (both inclusive) of the code shall apply to such trial. Every trial shall, as far as possible, be on a day-to-day basis and concluded within a period of three months from the date specified in the notice calling upon the accused to appear before the court.

Burden of proof: Notwithstanding anything contained in the Act, a person accused of an offence shall not be guilty of the offence if and only if, it is established the imputation made or published by him is true and if it be for the public good that the imputation shall be made or published and it is a question of fact as to whether it is for the public good. The onus of establishing that the imputation is true and it is for the public good shall be on the accused and the prosecution shall have the right to lead evidence in rebuttal. There was provision for appeal to the High Court for a convicted person.

An important provision in the Bill was that "where the accused being the editor, publisher or printer of a newspaper or periodical is prosecuted for an offence under the Defamation Act, 1988, the court shall not dispense with his personal attendance if it is proved that he has refused within a reasonable time to publish any reply of the person against whom any imputation relatable to such offence was made in the same manner and with the same prominence as the imputation was published in that newspaper or periodical. This proviso was to be inserted in modification of sub-section (I) of section

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205 of the code in its application to any proceedings in relation to an offence under the Act.

Section 13 in chapter III of the Bill laid down: "Notwithstanding anything contained in chapter II of this Act, whoever by words, either spoken or intended to be read or by sign or by visible representations makes or publishes any imputation falsely alleging that any person has committed an offence or has done or omitted to do any act which amounts to an offence under any law for the time being in force shall, in the case of the first offence, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one month but which may extend to one year and with fine which may extend to Rs. 2,000 and, in the case of a second or subsequent offence, with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three months but which may extend to two years and with fine which may extend to Rs. 5,000."

The second Press Commission in its report in 1984 made some recommendations with regard to defamation. The committee suggested that section 4 of the British Defamation Act of 1952 be introduced in India. This section provides that in a case where a publisher establishes that he unintentionally published words complained of and that he exercised all reasonable care in relation to the publication, he may make an offer to the claimant which would include an offer to publish a suitable correction and an apology. If the offer is accepted, proceedings in respect of the publication are barred. If the offer is rejected, the publisher can plead the rejection of the offer as a defence provided he establishes in addition to his innocence that the offer was made as soon as practicable after the defendant received notice that the words were defamatory of the plaintiff.

Section 6 of the British Defamation Act, 1952, says: "In an action for libel or slander in respect of words consisting partly of allegations of fact and partly of expressions of opinion, a defence of fair comment shall not fail by reason only that the truth of every allegation of fact is not proved if the expression of opinion is fair comment having regard to such of the facts alleged or referred to in the words complained

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or as are proved." The commission recommended the adoption of the principle underlying this section in the law of defamation by the enactment of suitable legislation.

The commission also recommended that section 8 of the British Defamation Act be enacted in India after dropping the proviso regarding "any blasphemous or indecent matter". This section provides that a fair and accurate report in any newspaper of proceedings of cases publicly heard before any court exercising judicial authority within the United Kingdom, "shall, if published contemporaneously with such proceedings, be privileged provided that nothing in this section shall authorise the publication of any blasphemous or indecent matter."

Section 500 of the I.P.C. provides that whoever defames another shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both. The commission approved the recommendation of the Law Commission which in its 42nd report suggested the amendment of this provision as follows; (1) Whoever defames another shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both; (2) where the offence has been committed by publishing an imputation in a newspaper, the court convicting the offender may further order that the judgment shall be published in whole or in part in such newspaper as it may specify, (3) the costs of such publication shall be recoverable from the convicted person as a fine.

The commission recommended that the schedule of the British Defamation Act, 1952, be adopted in India with certain modifications. Part I of the schedule gives statements having qualified privilege without explanation or contradiction and Part II gives statements privileged subject to explanation or contradiction. The entries in the schedule which are privileged without explanation or contradiction relate to fair and accurate report of any proceedings in public of the legislature of any foreign country, of an international organisation of which India is a member or of organisations recognised by the United Nations or of any international conference to which the

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Government of India sends a representative; of an international court; any court of a foreign country.

The commission discussed the question whether the defendant should prove not only the truth of the allegation but also that the publication was in public interest. In India today, truth is a complete defence to a civil action against defamation. It was represented to the commission that truth should not be a complete defence unless it is accompanied by public interest. The commission, however, saw no reason for any departure from the present position. "Truth alone should continue to be a complete defence."

The commission said unless "there is a *prima facie* case of malice, the magistrate trying a defamation case should dispense with the personal attendance of the accused. It suggested that clause (I) section 205 of Cr. P.C. 1973 be suitably amended to provide that in criminal complaints for defamation, unless there is a *prima facie* case of malice, the magistrate shall dispense with the personal attendance of the accused whenever summons is issued and permit him to appear by a pleader; but the magistrate may not dispense with the personal attendance of the accused where the accused is an editor, publisher or proprietor of a newspaper or periodical if he is satisfied that the accused has unreasonably refused to publish, within a reasonable time, a reply of the complainant to the alleged defamatory publication. The commission added: "We are not, however, proposing any interference with the wide discretion of the magistrate conferred by section 205 (2) to direct personal attendance of the accused at any subsequent stage of the proceedings."

With regard to the right of reply, the commission recognised the right of a person whose conduct or views have received adverse notice in the contents of a newspaper to defend or explain his position through the columns of that newspaper. In some West European countries, this right has received recognition in the area of defamation. The commission thought it very desirable to provide for a right of reply "as in our country, it is very difficult and cumbersome at present to pursue a case of defamation. "It, however, thought" it is not

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appropriate to lay down that the reply should get the same prominence or display or the same amount of space as the original report. It should be left to the good sense and discretion of the editor as it depends, among other things, on the news fall at a given time". The purpose of providing a right of reply is that the public should not be misled and should know the real position. Non-publication of a reply may be indicative of malice on the part of the newspaper and the plaintiff can attribute it in defamation proceedings while its publication will be a mitigating factor in the matter of awarding damages for defamation". The commission concluded : "We are of the view that for the present, a right of reply should be recognised by convention as a part of professional ethics and complaints alleging denial of the right should be looked into by the Press Council, as it is already doing."

It will be seen that the government had incorporated the commission's proposals in the bill only partially and in two important cases they had gone against the proposals of the commission. These relate to (1) truth alone as defence against defamation charge ; and (2) the right of the newspaper accused of defamation to publish the reply of the complainant subject to consideration of space and importance of matter and in the way he deemed fit and it should be recognised by convention as a part of professional ethics.

The Lok Sabha passed the Defamation Bill on August 30, 1988, by a voice vote after the Opposition parties had staged a walk-out protesting against the Bill. The Opposition opposed the imputation of criminal offence in a defamation case calling it aggravated defamation and said the Bill had been introduced by the government which was under "the shadow of scandals". The Minister of State for Home, P. Chidambaram, who piloted the Bill, refuted the Opposition charges and said the Bill had been brought forward after careful consideration and would, in fact, advance the freedom of the press instead of muzzling it, as claimed by the Opposition. He said the Bill aimed at liberalising the law of defamation, protecting the reputation of individuals and raising the standard of political debate. "I will defend until my death

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the right of newspapers to publish what is truth", the minister said. Investigation by journalists must lead to facts and not to insinuations and innuendos, he added. Under the country's law and Constitution, he said, the press enjoyed the same kind of rights as the ordinary citizen. Therefore, it should exercise the same restraints as a citizen.

"Publishing matters which are *per se* defamatory is one thing but defaming a person by charging him with a crime is quite another and there must be a law in the country to deal with such offences", Chidambaram said while defending clause 13 in chapter III of the Bill. Referring to the provision in the Bill throwing the onus of proof on the accused, he said that under section 105 of the Indian Evidence Act, the accused claiming "exception" had the onus of providing the exception. He said those who defamed persons by charging them with crimes must stand by their statements and prove them. "Those who take up the sword must be prepared to die by the sword," he said.

The Bill evoked a storm of protest from journalists and leaders of public opinion. *The Hindu* which along with the *Indian Express* led the frontal attack on the Bill, wrote: "Rather than investigate vigorously the instances of wrong-doing brought out in the Fairfax, HDW, Bofors and other controversies it (government) has, first by branding the disclosures as the result of a 'destabilisation' plot and then by launching a whitewash of an enquiry by a Parliamentary committee, strengthened the suspicion that there is a great deal to hide. If the Defamation Bill passed in a raging hurry by the Lok Sabha is meant to be a political counter-attack to stem the tide of disclosures, it is an affront to the nation's democratic conscience". *The Hindu* said that despite the government's claim that the Bill was modern and liberal "it is clear that the law of criminal defamation that emerges from it would be much more rigorous than what exists now!" The Bill, the paper said, created a special class of offence—the imputation of criminal conduct "that carries the 'exemplary' deterrent of a mandatory minimum punishment of one month's imprisonment for the first offence and a three-month term for

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subsequent offences. The paper pointed out that under the Bill an editor, publisher or printer would be entitled to exemption from personal appearance in court only if he published the complainant's reply with equal prominence as the original allegation. "It could well be that the editor, considering the reply to be patently false and not meriting publication, may establish that ultimately in court. Yet in the immediate context of seeking exemption from personal appearance he or she would have no option but to publish even a false or frivolous reply." *The Hindu* said : "At a time where there is a rising tide of press, intellectual and in general public opinion in favour of expanding the freedom of information, reducing the role of official secrecy and dismantling archaic provisions in the legal framework relating to the people's right to know, the government has done the nation and the press a major disservice in pushing through a restrictive and backward looking Bill that every section of democratic opinion must oppose and condemn".

The *Indian Express* listed five major objections to the bill (1) it greatly enlarged the definition of what was to be regarded as a defamatory statement. This was now to include any 'imputation (which) exposes directly or indirectly such persons to hatred, contempt or ridicule or disparages or causes injury to such person in his trade business, profession, calling or office ; (2) it greatly raised the penalties for the office . . . (3) it incorporated into a central law the provision about "grossly indecent or scurrilous" writing which had been universally condemned when it was sought to be introduced in the Bihar Press Bill of 1982 ; (4) it provided that the trial should begin at the level of sessions court and the court might not only conduct the proceedings in camera, it might try the charges in a "summary way" ; (5) it overturned the very principle on which our jurisprudence rests, namely, that the accused is presumed innocent till he is proved guilty. It decreed that the accused shall have to prove that he is innocent.

Arun Shourie wrote : "So extreme is section 13 of the Bill that even if you reproduce what has been said in the legislature

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of a foreign country, an international organisation, a court in any foreign country, a commission, tribunal or committee, even if you do no more than reproduce accurately an averment in any of these fora to the effect that X or Y has violated a law or failed to do what the law required him to do, you are liable for prosecution. For instance, if you merely reproduce the report of Amnesty International to the effect that the police in Punjab had tortured someone, you would be putting up yourself for prosecution. And you will put yourself just as certainly for prosecution if you report a statement made in, say, the Swedish, German or British Parliament, a Swiss court that such and such Indian had collected money from Bofors, HDW and Westland."

A journalist writing on the Bill said : "The tendency in democratic societies has, in recent periods, been towards decriminalising the law of defamation. When the competing rights to reputation and to free speech are held in balance through the law, the state has tended increasingly not to interpose itself on the side of the complainant but to withdraw to the sidelines, letting the parties sort it out in the civil courts. Even when criminal laws of defamation remain on the statute book, they are seldom used. "The writer pointed out the Defamation Bill" ran counter to a whole lot of trends that would make for an open, more democratic society. By enlarging the definition of defamation, by creating two new offences of scurrilous writing and of imputing criminal conduct (that carries a mandatory sentence of imprisonment) and by increasing the penalties and tightening the procedures it has sought to make the exercise of free speech more hazardous."

A statement issued by leading editors and senior journalists from all over the country described the Bill "as a gigantic, many-faceted fraud on the public. It is a fraud which has bent Parliamentary procedures and it is a fraud on the support it claims from the reports of the Law Commission and the second Press Commission. It is a desperate measure and only a desperate government weighted under its own guilt could be in need of the protective cover of secrecy it offers." The statement said : "The Bill is intended to close all avenues to the

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press and the public to point their finger of condemnation at people known to be guilty of corruption and other forms of malfeasance. Such a diabolical measure has no place in a free and democratic society and it must be withdrawn." The statement attacked the provision in the Bill which laid the onus of providing his charge on the accused and said this was often impossible. "Take the case of a reporter who has happened to see a government file dealing with a shady transaction by courtesy of a conscience stricken officer. He duly writes about the case knowing that the truth is on his side. But the evidence to prove this lies with the government which claims privilege and refuses to produce it. The result is that he goes to jail." The statement said : "This is a Bill written by an, 'unequal hand' with an evil eye. It must be fought tooth and nail by making the public aware of its sinister intent and possibilities."

In an appeal to the members of the Rajya Sabha which had to pass the Bill to make it law, the Editors Guild of India said that the Bill had "provoked nation-wide protests from all sections of democratic opinion unheard of in the case of any measure brought before Parliament in its entire history. The demand for its withdrawal has been voiced by journalists of all shades of opinion, including those who are supporters of the ruling party." The guild said the Bill in its entire conception and specific provisions "is repugnant to all tenets of democracy. In the name of curbing defamation, the Bill expands the definition of defamation in a manner that seeks to stifle the citizen's right to know and thereby offends the principles of freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution." The basic tenet of the rule of law, the guild said, was that the court went by the presumption of innocence until one was proved guilty. "But the new Bill introduces instead the obnoxious doctrine of presumption guilt, a journalist hauled up for defamation would himself have to prove his innocence and not the accuser proving his guilt. In other words, any piece of published matter can be charged by anybody to be false and it is for the journalist to prove that it is not so." The guild said. By this Bill the press is confronted with the

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virtual closure of all avenues of information by which it can serve the community." The Bill if passed, the guild said, "will help shield the corrupt and the vicious and persecute any journalist engaged in the honest pursuit of combating such anti-social elements." The guild quoted a letter written 50 years ago to a doyen of the Indian press by Jawaharlal Nehru. "The freedom of the press," "Nehru wrote, "does not consist in our permitting such things as we like to appear. Even a tyrant is agreeable to this type of freedom. Civil liberty and freedom of the press consist in our permitting what we do not like, in our putting up with criticism of ourselves, in our allowing public expression of views which seem to us to be injurious to our cause itself. For it is always a dangerous thing to seek a temporary advantage at the cost of larger good or of the final objective."

C.R. Irani, chairman of the Press Freedom Committee of the Indian Newspaper Society, said the Bill was the most serious attack since independence "upon the press, upon the basic liberties of all our citizens and upon the principles of jurisprudence that are enshrined in our Constitution. The Bill will discourage if not eliminate altogether serious investigative journalism, afford shelter and protection to those who flout our laws with impunity and serves notice that our rulers are above the law."

All sections of the newspaper industry, journalists, press workers, and proprietors voiced their protest against the Bill in a massive rally on September 5 at the Boat Club in New Delhi. They took a pledge to fight until the Bill was withdrawn. "Let the word go out from here", the pledge said, "to all corners of the country that we cannot and shall not compromise or be cowed down when the freedom of the press is threatened. None however high in the land can take liberties with our fundamental right. And let it be known that we shall fight with all our might if there is any onslaught on our freedom of expression now or later."

A noted columnist describing the protest rally wrote. "It was a heady moment for the Indian press on September 5. The protest march against the Defamation Bill from the

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Eternal Flame at New Delhi's India Gate to the Boat Club attracted a veritable roster of the best known names in Indian journalism. Proprietors led by the spunky Ramnath Goenka of the *Indian Express*, editors, columnists, reporters and sub-editors trudged the four-kilometre route under a merciless sun. A former colleague enthused: 'It's wonderful how proprietors have got lost in the crowd." '

As part of their campaign against the Bill the press and news agencies observed a one-day token strike throughout the country on September 7.

The prime minister's reaction to the volley of protests was to express surprise. "We will like them (press) to read the Bill", he said. "We are totally convinced that we are proceeding on the right line." On another occasion he said : "The press will have to convince me that the Bill is rubbish. The press should give suggestions."

However, on September 4, Rajiv Gandhi announced that the government would defer introduction of the bill in the Rajya Sabha and would invite suggestions for modifications and improvements to the Bill from the press and the public. For this purpose, a ministerial committee consisting of five Cabinet ministers had been constituted to receive and hear representations. The reply of the Coordination Committee of the press which was leading the agitation against the Bill was to demand total withdrawal of the Bill before there could be a dialogue. Echoing this demand, *The Hindu* wrote : "It was an insult to the collective intelligence of the press and to the democratic instincts of the people of India that the authors of the atrociously draconian and unenlightened attempt to change the law of criminal defamation so misjudged the mood as to imagine that they could sneak this in and get away with the coup. Every self-respecting newspaper and every periodical which has had a chance to write about the issue has condemned and denounced the coup attempted against the freedom of the press in the name of tightening the law of criminal defamation. . . . given the institutional importance and, indeed, centrality of the issue there can be no individual or vague

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'dialogue' at this stage between journalists and the government. Since the whole philosophy is bad, there is no question of finding a solution through the technical device of amending or tinkering with 'certain features' of the Bill . . . the sound and just way out is for the government simply to withdraw the Bill."

Arun Shourie wrote in the *Indian Express* : "The government doesn't want a dialogue. It wants to break the momentum that is building up against its idiotic Bill. Once it can put out that sections of journalists have already begun talking to it about possible amendments in the Bill, it will be that much more difficult to sustain the momentum of the protest. So the answer to a man must be as it has been : there is nothing to talk about. Withdraw the Bill."

The prime minister continued to defend the Bill and to insist that he believed in the freedom of the press. Speaking at the golden jubilee celebrations of the *National Herald* in New Delhi on September 9, he said : "Something has broken down in our system of protecting the individual from libellous or defamatory comment. There are serious allegations of moral misconduct against people in high positions. The judicial process takes an inordinately long time. In the meantime, the moral authority of the person suffers damaging public interest. Matters must be resolved quickly one way or another. Either the allegation is proved and the person involved takes the consequences or the man who has made the false allegation suffers punishment under the law. Names and individuals are not important. What is important is the adequacy of the law and of the procedures to deliver justice."

The prime minister said : "Much of the press is today upset with us. We believe the annoyance is caused by a gross misunderstanding of, and misapprehensions about, our motives and intentions." People who believed they had been victimised or defamed, he said, were hardly able to find justice through the medium of the Press Council or the courts. He referred to one case where the court judgement came after 10 years. "But while the judgment was published, the cause of the complaint found no place in the news reports," Rajiv Gandhi said.

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"But none of this points to any crisis of confidence on our part. Nor is there any cover up going on as alleged. All we have to note is that while much is right with the press, there are some things which are wrong owing to infirmities in our law and in the functioning of the legal system." He said that "something needs to be done to restore the balance between the freedom of the press and the freedom of the individual to seek protection under the law from defamation." He pointed out that the government, the bureaucracy and the judiciary must all strive to be healthy "even if the reality is that there are lapses and sometimes grave lapses at that. Even so, the press should strive for higher standards and self-correcting mechanism. Members of the press are, like the rest of us, only human and subject to the same kind of failings as the rest of us. There is little room for self-righteousness on anyone's part in those matters. Inaccuracies and errors abound in government as in the press. Mistakes are made by the government. Mistakes are made by the press. There is no denying that dishonesty and deceit can sometimes afflict the government. They can also sometimes afflict the press. When the self-correcting mechanism of the government do not succeed, the press has to sometimes come in to correct the waywardness of the government. Sometimes, when the self-correcting mechanisms of the press do not succeed, the law has to come in to correct the waywardness of the press."

The prime minister renewed his call for dialogue and said he was open to argument and persuasion. "We are ready to listen to those who will talk to us", he said. "We are ready to talk to those who will listen to us". He reaffirmed "our undying conviction on the need for a free press. We are not afraid of criticism. We welcome it. We are not afraid of unfavourable comment, we welcome it. We are not afraid of exposures. We welcome exposures that reveal wrong-doing. We welcome investigation that leads to the truth. We welcome criticism and comment, investigation and exposure because a healthy democracy needs a mechanism other than the government itself to act as the rudder which keeps the ship of state on course, to show up programmes and policies which have gone wrong and to unveil the turpitude and malfeasance of

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individuals or organisations."

"We look upon the freedom of the press," Rajiv Gandhi said, "as essential to the building of our modern nationhood. The freedom of the press for us is an article of faith sanctified by our Constitution, validated by four decades of freedom and indispensable to our future as a nation."

There was, however, no positive response from the journalists to the prime minister's appeal and the agitation for withdrawal of the Bill continued unabated. Journalists wore black badges and walked out of press conferences if the ministers or Congressmen did not give a categorical answer on the question of the withdrawal of the Bill. The All India Newspaper Editors Conference and the All India Small and Medium Newspapers Federation whose representatives met the ministerial committee set up to receive representations on the Bill, urged the government to withdraw the Bill before starting a dialogue with the press. C.R. Irani, convenor of the National Coordination Committee of the Press and managing director of the *Statesman*, said the prime minister's offer of dialogue was meaningless as he was not taking note of innumerable writings against the Bill. A dialogue in a democratic manner should have taken place before drafting the Bill, he added. The Editors Guild of India said while it would welcome any move for genuine dialogue aimed at strengthening and improving the law with regard to defamation, it felt the "unprincipled—Defamation Bill cannot be a basis for a purposeful dialogue."

Seeing the intensity of feeling against the Bill from all quarters of the country and the arguments marshalled against it by eminent jurists including former Supreme Court judges and, more especially, the rising tide of criticism in the ruling party itself, the government began to have second thoughts on proceeding with the Bill. According to one columnist, the timing of the Bill made the government's motives doubly suspect that its introduction closely followed exposures in the press of the sordid details of kickbacks in defence and other deals with footprints leading to persons close to the seat of power. The suspicion that the law was intended to be tightened to check further investigation by the press was, therefore, bound to be strong.

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On September 22, the prime minister announced the withdrawal of the Bill in view of the misapprehensions and misgivings it had aroused and in view of the concerns expressed by the press and public. The prime minister said in his statement : "The Defamation Bill, 1988, was brought forward to protect the individual from defamatory speeches, writings and actions and to provide adequate and timely redress to the aggrieved. The Bill seeks to codify the existing law on the subject and to take it forward in some areas. Defamation, as defined in the Bill, is not an issue between government and the press, but an issue between individual and individual, between a person aggrieved and a person accused. The Bill attempts to reconcile the rights of an individual with the right to freedom of expression of another. A free press is an integral part of the inner strength and dynamism of our democracy. Without a free press there can be no democracy. The imperishable values of our freedom struggle have gone into the making of the press in India. We uphold this legacy. We shall continue to do so. Our commitment to the freedom of the press is total. We have no intention of curbing, in any way, the freedom of the press. The freedom and rights of the individual are equally sacred. It is this that makes the issue of defamation a serious issue. The Bill seeks to resolve the issue in accordance with the basic principles of our Constitution and the laws. It has, however, aroused misapprehensions and misgivings. The press and sections of the public have expressed their concern. We are alive to these concerns. We draw inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi who always responded to democratic expression of opinion. We, therefore, offered an unconditional dialogue on the subject. Some organisations and individuals have responded to this offer. We feel, however, that there should be a wider and fuller national debate. In order to facilitate such a debate and in keeping with our heritage and traditions, we have decided not to make the Defamation Bill, 1988, into law. The issue of defamation remains. It is our earnest hope that concerned citizens, jurists and the media will participate in the national debate on the issue of defamation. In course of

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time, government may, if necessary, create a suitable forum to carry forward the dialogue in a spirit of understanding and cooperation. A solution based on a national consensus will strengthen the institutions of our republic."

With that a month long battle ended in an undoubted victory for the press which despite the government's best efforts had stubbornly and manfully stuck to the stand that they would settle for nothing short of total withdrawal of the Bill. H.K. Dua, editor of the *Hindustan Times*, a normally pro-Establishment daily that had taken a tough line against the Bill, commented: "The government must have realised the folly of making an attempt to steal through Parliament a piece of legislation that sought to deny 80 crore people of this land the right of expression, forgetting that the laws not accepted by the people are not worth the paper they are written on."

The Hindu wrote: "Now that the Bill has been withdrawn there need not be any inhibition in participating in an informed and democratic discussion on issues that matter to the press and to the people (whom the government is elected to represent). On the specific issues raised, the delays, inefficiencies and the frustrations in the matter of aggrieved citizens obtaining relief under the law which treats defamation as a civil wrong must not be confused with the pre-modern and non-progressive practice of treating defamation as a criminal offence." *The Hindu* said that in the United Kingdom (from which India derived its jurisprudence to a considerable extent) and in the United States, the state had tended increasingly not to interpose itself on the side of the complainant but to withdraw to the sidelines—letting the parties sort it out in the civil courts. "The delays in the legal process," *The Hindu* wrote, "relating to the law of civil defamation must be eliminated, of course, but this problem must be addressed as part of the broader question of combating the law's delays. As for the press, it is entitled after this experience to ask that its historically won entitlement—known in shorthand form as the freedom of the press—must be treated by all players in democratic India now and in the future as nothing less than an inalienable democratic right."

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The *Indian Express* wrote: "For this belated retreat from obstinate obtuseness, the government and more particularly the prime minister deserve congratulations. But it would not be churlish to suggest the prime minister could easily have done earlier what he now has and spared the nation the trauma of the imminence of the destruction of free speech and himself the humiliation of a climb down from an impossible position. And yet the experience has been worthwhile both for him and the public. Both have now a true measure of the awareness of an indignant public opinion when it feels deeply hurt by the machinations of those in power. The Indian public is a patient and long suffering one. But when it is moved to the depths of its being, let tyrants beware."

Arun Shourie in a signed editorial in the same paper wrote "Demoralised, buffetted by one act of highhandedness after another, helpless in the face of rulers who have hijacked the country, the people have needed a victory. They have got one." Arun Shourie said: "The great gain is not that the Bill is gone but that we have yet another occasion for the people to realise their strength, for them to see that they have but to shake off their passivity and the rulers are brought to heel. And it is imperative that they realise this."

C.R. Irani congratulated the government and the prime minister on the "courage they have shown in their decision not to proceed with the Bill." "If later on, in a calmer atmosphere any honest debate becomes necessary," he added, "I am sure the press will respond in full measure." Similar sentiments were expressed by the Indian Newspaper Society President, Turin Kanti Ghose, who said that while the society believed that the existing laws on the subject of defamation were adequate if anyone felt that changes in the law were necessary, it would be willing to examine the case as to what changes where needed and why, objectively and in the much better atmosphere created by the withdrawal of the Bill.

The *Times of India* wrote: "The prime minister's decision to drop the Defamation Bill will be widely welcomed in the country." H.K. Dua of the *Hindustan Times* described Rajiv Gandhi's statement about his commitment to freedom of the

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press as a welcome assurance. The *Indian Post* of Bombay wrote: "It is commendable that the government had realised the wisdom of not forcing a debate under the shadow of a patently authoritarian measure. The media should have little objection to a dialogue now." A leading columnist wrote: "It is nobody's case that reform is not needed in the press but any policing system must be devised by the press itself and if the defamation law needs tightening, it must be done after full consultation with representative organisations of the press."

Thus ended the great confrontation between the government and the press, unprecedented in the annals of Indian journalism alike in its magnitude and in the unparalleled unity displayed by journalists of all hues and shades and opinion. But it was a truce not a peace for the vital issue raised by the government remained unanswered and the press was nowhere near agreeing to look at it and go along with the government in solving it. The deep suspicions of the press about the government's motives and action remained. The government's alienation of the press had gone too far and taken strong roots and it had irretrievably lost the sympathy which it had in abundance when Rajiv Gandhi took over as prime minister three years earlier. Will the Indian press ever be the same after this confrontation in which it has emerged as the victor ? It will be difficult to predict.

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Modern journalism was grafted on the Indian soil more than two centuries ago. Since then it has been growing and developing in the peculiar environment of this country. But even though departments of journalism in universities have been in existence since 1941, journalism teaching continues to be dependent mainly on British and American books. For the Indian student they are of not much use because their context is not Indian. This is one of the reasons why a journalism graduate finds himself a misfit in the actual field situation.

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